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# THE SOCIAL RECORD OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

JOSEPH McCABE,

Author of

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## PREFACE

IN the year 1871 the statesmen of Japan sent a large delegation to Europe and America to study the moral and social influence of Christianity. Convinced that it was no longer possible or expedient to keep their country a still and stately old-world garden into which no echo of the new age should penetrate, they had decided to blend all that was beautiful in its culture with the strong progressive forces of Western civilization. Missionaries claimed that the Christian religion was one of the most beneficently constructive of these forces, and a body of learned and ideally impartial Japanese were sent to examine the justice of the claim. All were Agnostics and were fully prepared to recommend, for the instruction of the uneducated mass of the people, a religion which would evidently help them to disarm the prejudice of the white nations. But the delegates returned to Japan to report that Christianity "had proved itself less efficacious as an ethical influence in the West than Buddhism had done in the East."

This was not the kind of news that wins banner-headlines in the Press, and the few who heard it were astonished. In 1871 it was still regarded as the first law of European history that Christianity had created Western civilization and was one of the chief causes of the supremacy of the white race. Preachers still

assured their congregations how their Church had, eighteen centuries earlier, penetrated the gloom and murk of the ancient world, and the fetters had fallen from the slave, woman was lifted from the dust, the child was taken into loving arms, schools and hospitals began to appear, the blood of gladiators no longer clotted on the sands of the arena . . . The fairy tale is still sufficiently familiar.

The new history, it is true, had already begun to remove the drapery of the myth. Even Gibbon had said that "the banners of the Church had never been seen on the side of the people." Finlay had caustically remarked that if our modern civilization was the outcome of Christianity the length of time between the appearance of the cause and the effect had no parallel in history. Buckle was scornful, and even Lecky, after long chapters of prudent compliments to the new religion, had blandly concluded :

Few men who are not either priests or monks would not have preferred to live in the best days of the Athenian or the Roman Republics, in the age of Augustus or in the age of the Antonines, rather than in any period that elapsed between the triumph of Christianity and the fourteenth century

So all the beautiful ideas and influences which Lecky discovers in the new religion were somehow followed by a thousand years—from the fourth to the fourteenth century—in which few men would care to live. It was, he says later, "one of the most contemptible periods in history."

It is no longer possible for one historian to cover so satisfactorily the entire period of the Christian Era

that he can give a positive answer to the question whether Christianity helped or hindered the progress of civilization. But the distribution of the field between a hundred specialist workers has led to scientific precision in the establishment of facts, and here I give a summary of the generally accepted results in each section and unite them in a continuous story. In some sense this little work is a re-write of *The Church and the People*, which I published in 1919. But the canvas is broader, and the detail is enriched by fifteen further years of study of social history; though the account of changes in the condition of the workers, who were until recent times four-fifths of the people, remains the chief theme of the work.

J. M.



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# THE SOCIAL RECORD OF CHRISTIANITY

## CHAPTER I

### MYTHS ABOUT THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

THE first correction of the ancient legend which modern history makes is the discovery that Christianity came, not into a world of darkness and the shadow of death, but into a world that had renewed its youth, into the most enlightened, most progressive, most idealistic age that the race had yet known. Imperialism had wrecked the older kingdoms, but it had inaugurated a cosmopolitan life which brought the ideas and ideals of a dozen nations into stimulating contact. The Mediterranean Sea was the heart of the new world ; the ship, rising sometimes to four or five thousand tons and having baths, libraries, and lounges, was its symbol. In fifty coast-cities from Alexandria to Spain the old arts, religions, and politics mingled, and out of the ferment issued in time a new and nobler art, a new civic sense, a new method of attaining knowledge by the direct study of nature and man, and a score or two of new religions, philosophies, and moralities. The stretch of time from 600 B.C. to A.D. 400 was one of the three great progressive



millennia of history. In the second and maturer half of that millennium Christianity appeared.

Even the thoughtful but inexpert public commonly imagine that this advance of the race toward real civilization relaxed, if it did not cease, when the Golden Age of Athenian life ended, and that therefore the beginning of the Christian Era marks a period of decay. This is entirely wrong. Art, it is true, lost the inspiration of genius, but in compensation the love of beauty spread broadly over the Greco-Roman world, and the central parts of a hundred cities gleamed with a marble splendour of which we still find noble fragments even on the ragged hills of Asia Minor and in the deserts of Syria and North Africa. It is true that no new Plato or Aristotle arose, but instead there came moralists whose ideals were much nearer to ours, and they had over the entire Greco-Roman world an influence immeasurably greater than Plato and Aristotle had had at Athens ; while those discoveries of the Greek intellect which we now most appreciate, the principles of science, were carried to the point at which they begin to disclose their inestimable value to the race. Alexandria under the Ptolemies and the Romans did more for the world's intellectual advance than Athens had ever done.

But we are here chiefly concerned with those discoveries which yield a saner guidance of life and help to reduce the world's burden of suffering, injustice, and callousness. In this respect the second half of that great millennium was particularly fruitful. The cult of the goddess of love and maternity, which had had such picturesque developments in Syria, had led

to two new attitudes of the mind of the race. The more admirable of these was that when the Greeks and other Aryan peoples came into contact with this cult in Asia Minor they generally discarded the excesses of its love-temples, but eagerly adopted its assurance that all men are brothers under the motherhood of the great earth-goddess. It is a large and as yet little-known development—Sir W. Ramsay, a Christian historian, has rendered fine service in tracing it—and I must here be content to say that from Lydia and the Greek cities of Asia Minor there spread over the whole Greco-Roman world a spirit of friendliness, of good-fellowship, of brotherhood which alleviated the lot of millions of people.

There were, especially, two ways in which the new spirit exerted an active influence. It passed into the philosophies of Zeno and Epicurus, who derived their doctrine of the brotherhood of men from Asia Minor. There are foolish attempts to show that Christianity, which reached the Greco-Roman world along the same path more than three centuries later, must have been more effective because it mingled with the common folk from whom the learned philosophers were isolated. Those who speak thus wrongly imagine that students of Greek philosophy were always as remote from the crowd as were Plato and Aristotle. On the contrary, philosophers at times dominated cities in the Greek world, and their systems guided jurists and inspired rulers. And no philosophy was so effective as the blend of a Stoicism relieved of its mysticism and asceticism, and an Epicureanism applied to daily life which became the chief inspiration of the later Greco-

Roman world. Professor Gilbert Murray observes that "all the principal kings in existence in the generations following Zeno professed themselves Stoics," and it is a commonplace of history that under the Stoic emperors of Rome social idealism was borne to the highest point it had yet attained. In both cases, but especially the latter, the inspiration was a humanist blend of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies.

The second practical issue was the establishment of innumerable little local groups of brotherly-minded and mutually-helpful workers. In all cities from Asia Minor to Italy the tanners, bakers, smiths, sailors, etc., had their "clubs" or "unions," as we now say, with meeting-rooms, benevolent funds, and periodical gay suppers. Each club had its patron deity and had a statue of the god or goddess in the meeting-room. Here brotherhood was the law. Women and slaves were, as the inscriptions tell, admitted with the free workers, and wealthy patrons often built the clubhouse. Both these outcomes of the brotherhood-spirit had spread over the Greco-Roman world before Christianity left its cradle. The barbaric features of the law were removed or softened by Stoic jurists. The condition of the slave was alleviated. Woman was relieved of her disabilities. Education was continuously extended, and many of the harsher features of old Roman life—which, let us not forget, was only a few centuries removed from barbarism—were obliterated or subjected to increasing criticism.

These developments had begun before Christianity was born and had proceeded far before it had the least

social influence. But first let us notice another effect of the hectic cult of the love-goddess in and around Syria. By reaction it gave birth to a number of ascetic religions and moralities which stressed the sense of sin or shame, the need of purification, the contamination of sexual indulgence. Mithraism, and the new and ascetic cult of Isis from Egypt, which were both religions of this character, had their temples in Rome and Italy two centuries before the Roman Christians had the most modest sort of meeting-place, and the former swept the Roman world as far as Britain. Later came from Asia Minor the Manichæan religion, which was even more ascetic and redemptive. These religions were at hand on every side, as well as the teaching of the more austere Stoics, to meet the needs of the more mystic and the puritanical.

The Christian religion sprang from the same Persian root. Not differing from any of the rival religions and moralities, from the new and more humane Judaism of the first century to the teaching of the latest wandering moralist, in the sentiments of justice, kindliness, and mercy which were the common idealist property of the age, it had nevertheless a message of personal asceticism which was in some ways peculiar to itself. Unlike the Manichæan religion, which clung to the Persian dogma that the devil had created matter (and therefore the flesh), it modified this by using the old Semitic legend that the devil had perverted what God had made pure. This enabled it to retain the strict Persian horror of the flesh, and it seems to have been even more faithful than Manichæanism to the

second outstanding dogma of the old Persian religion : that God would on some unknown day destroy the world, judge all men, and punish the wicked everlastingly. Moreover, it started from some Jewish preacher, probably the Jesus of the gospels, who, apparently after years of brooding in an Essenian monastery, in which Persian and Jewish ideas met, became convinced that this end of the world was at hand, and a man must rid himself of the material entanglements of wealth and love to prepare for the judgment or, as the Persian bible calls it on every page, the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The efforts of some of our Modernist theologians to prove that Jesus did not preach this doctrine incur the scorn of other, and not conservative, divines. The passages in which Jesus threatens men with eternal fire are, on the principles of the Modernists themselves, amongst the very oldest and presumably most authentic in the Gospels ; and the generally accepted letters of Paul, which are held to be still earlier, are afire with the doctrine. And this one entirely distinctive doctrine of the new religion, while it should inspire a particularly fervent zeal for individual purity and virtue, ought to restrain any man from looking to it for a social ethic. It is, in fact, only under the pressure of our sceptical and socially-minded age that these books and sermons on the social inspiration of Jesus began to appear, and they were successful in their appeal only because, until we started a real science of comparative religion and unearthed the religious literature of Egypt and Babylonia, most people wrongly believed that Christianity

differed from other religions in its stress on justice, charity, and mutual aid.

This new zeal for a social ethic went so far that some of our more radical clergy began to find the germs of Socialism or Communism, as well as of pacifism and other modern ideals, in the sentiments of the early Christians. We have made no new discovery about early Christianity, and we are as far as ever from certainty about the shadowy figure that is reflected in the late and contradictory pages of the Gospels, but even ecclesiastical historians now read their documents more candidly. The familiar picture of the early Christian groups as Communist and frugal colonies, oases of fragrant virtue, in the rich and wicked cities of the Greco-Roman world, is a false description of their life even in the days of Paul, the earliest period in which we have a tolerably certain, though not wholly undisputed, glimpse of "followers of Christ."

The two groups of which Paul's scanty domestic references afford the best knowledge are those of Rome and Corinth. The group at Corinth gave Paul constant concern. In what we call his First Epistle to them, though he says in it that he has rebuked them in an earlier letter, we read that for some reason, which we plausibly assume to be their relative wealth, they will not expel members even for incest (v, 1).

Others of the group continue, despite his protests, to attend the meals given in honour of the gods in the temples. It appears that this is one of the wealthiest, or least poor, of the communities. They have paid teachers of religion, and they send funds to the poorer community at Jerusalem. Of communism and soli-

clarity in virtue there is no question. And the letter sent to them by the Romans under Clement at the end of the century tells us that the Corinthian Church is still of poor character.

The very small community at Rome, in the shipping and foreign quarter by the quays, was just as far removed from Socialism. Paul, writing to them about the year 55, sends his greetings to those members who are "of Narcissus's people" (the correct translation) and others "of Aristobulus's people." The phrase suggests, as Duchesne says, that they are clients, or middle-class dependants, of two rich Romans; for Narcissus was the most powerful courtier of the Emperor Claudius, even if a freedman, and Aristobulus was a friend of the Emperor and grandson of King Herod. Indeed, writing from Rome to the Philippians in the days of Nero, Paul sends greetings from "those who are of the Emperor's people"; and Paul was not in the habit of sending the compliments of slaves. The First Epistle to Timothy is now ascribed by many to an unknown author—if it were not in the Bible we should say forger—of the end of the century, though others still regard it as written by Paul before the year 65. It indicates that some in the community are rich, and it merely urges them to be generous.

In short, it is absurdly unhistorical to take a temporary practice of the very poor group at Jerusalem which lived largely on alms from the other churches, and call this Primitive Christianity. As Dr. Shirley J. Case, who nevertheless contrives to see radical social and political aims in the new religion (ignoring the

expectation of a speedy end of the world), points out, the little groups consisted of men and women of every class, the poorer workers meeting with the others in the homes of those who were rich enough to have large rooms. Apart from their ritual Communion Supper, they had periodical convivial suppers, and naturally the comfortable members shared their good food with the very poor. You may see it done in a parochial picnic to-day.

There is, in any case, no question of a social influence of the new religion on the Roman world before the fourth century, when the Emperor began to profess the Christian faith. Orthodox folk used to imagine that the new religion made a deep impression on the pagans because of the heroism with which tens of thousands of martyrs endured torture and death. But the tortures and other details of the old legends are so comically foreign to Roman life that a higher criticism of this amazing branch of literature began centuries ago. Now even Catholic scholars like the Jesuit Father Delehay and Dr. Ehrhard tell us that almost the whole of these martyr-stories are either pure fiction or romances based upon a grain of obscure fact. The more popular the martyr (George, Agnes, Catherine, Cæcilia, Denis, Laurence, Sebastian, etc.) and the more picturesque the story, the more certain it is to be fictitious. Very few records of martyrdoms are now accepted as genuine.

The truth is that in the two (not seven) general persecutions of Christians, for definite political reasons, almost the entire body apostatized. It is, for instance, claimed—excessively, I estimate—that there were



50,000 Christians at Rome when Decius ordered the first general persecution. Now, the Catholic Professor Ehrhard says, approvingly, of the work of his Jesuit colleague :

He puts *all* accounts of Roman martyrs in the third class of Acts of Martyrs, which we may describe as religious romances (*Die altchristliche Literatur*, p 556).

In a special small work Father Delehaye has shown that no Christians were ever exposed to the lions in the Roman amphitheatre. In fact, we can hardly trace a score of Roman martyrs in the Decian persecution, and thus nearly the whole body rushed to offer incense at the pagan altars or bribe officials to certify that they had done so.

Hence the claim of moral influence in this respect is entirely mythical and is based upon stories which were forged by the thousand at Rome in the early part of the Dark Age. And an outline of the history of the Roman Church—I have written it in full elsewhere—the only branch of the Church which could conceivably exercise any other social influence, will suffice to show that there is no question of such influence before the age of Constantine.

That the little group grew in numbers and virtue for a few years under the personal supervision of Paul in the days of Nero, and that there was then a persecution in which Paul (though certainly not Peter) was executed, I accept as historical facts ; chiefly on the ground of the Roman tradition which appears in Clement's Letter to the Corinthians thirty years later. The forged reference in Tacitus to " an immense number of Christians " I, of course, do not accept. It was

a group that could gather round the fiery apostle in some private house in the poor suburb across the Tiber. If we accepted the Roman tradition that Nero's wife Poppæa—as vicious a woman as that morbid age produced—was a Christian, and that a few years later the patrician Flavius Clemens and his wife joined the sect, we get far away from the picture of an austere communist group. But Roman literature is drenched with forgery about the first three centuries.

What we do know, for it is recorded in the official annals (the Pontifical Calendar), is that the Roman Christians still met in private houses until the year 220, when they secured the room above a poor wine-shop, and for the first time bought a few silver cups. About this time the community grew very much larger, and it discarded the last trace of austerity. It is a contemporary Roman bishop, Hippolytus, the one scholar whom the Roman Church produced in many centuries and a man of strict character, who tells the sordid story. Pope Callistus, a wily and greedy ex-slave, enjoyed the favour of the leading lady of the immense and utterly revolting harem of the Emperor Commodus, Marcia, who had been reared to her trade by a Christian eunuch. It is enough here to say that Callistus repealed the church-law which excluded grave sinners, and numbers of wealthy and vicious Roman ladies joined the sect.

This was the body which, in thirty years of toleration, grew to, on my estimate, about 20,000 at the most, and was scattered by the first wind of persecution. The African Father, Tertullian, whose

Church offered far more martyrs in this Decian persecution, speaks with the bitterest disdain of the Romans. However, in the ensuing peace the Church was restored, and in a further forty years of toleration it came once more to number about 20,000. This, we must remember, was in a city of about a million people ; and, as the Greek language was used in the ritual and the Popes were nonentities with no supporters of any distinction, it would be absurd to inquire if they had any influence on the life of Rome or the Empire.

In the first decade of the fourth century the great Emperor Diocletian ordered the destruction of Christianity. He is the first emperor who had Christians in his family and in high positions in his palace and army. But, instead of this giving them an influence on Roman life, they provoked by their insolence the drastic persecution which again sent all but a score or so of the 20,000 Roman Christians to the pagan altars. Doubtless hundreds did linger in the subterranean catacombs, but we now perceive that these became the burying-place of ordinary Christians in the peace that followed, and it was the profit of the traffic in relics, which began half a century later, that converted most of these into " martyrs." By 305 Christianity was in ruins. But seven years later the cross glittered at the head of Constantine's armies at the gates of Rome, and from this point we begin a serious study of the social record of Christianity.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW ANCIENT SLAVERY ENDED.

LET me first stress the importance of making this chronological point clear. In support of the myth that the new religion brought into the Roman world a higher ideal of conduct it was customary to paint the Romans, before they were touched by the Christian ethic, in the darkest colours. Nine-tenths of the readers knew nothing of Roman history, and you could quote the horrors of the short reigns of Caligula or Nero, and even borrow Mommsen's sombre description of Roman life eighty years before Jesus was born, to convey an impression of the kind of vice which Christianity regenerated. It is therefore material to understand that, whatever periods of decay or license there may have been in Roman history before the fourth century, this has nothing to do with the influence of Christianity.

One historical fact ought to puzzle any man or woman who still cherishes the legend. Six years before Jesus was born, as that date is now generally conceived, the Emperor Augustus took so stern a step in the interest of virtue that it has scarcely a parallel in the lives of rulers. The law of these wicked Romans punished adultery with death. You may, in fact, find it amusing to tell your simple-minded Chris-

tian friend, who believes that the Babylonians and the Romans were the most licentious of all peoples, that they were almost the only two great nations who in their law imposed the death-penalty for adultery. Happily, it was not usually applied, but Augustus set the law in motion against the smart set of Rome, and, when he was convinced that his beautiful and dearly-loved daughter Julia was one of the sinners, he, in spite of the entreaties of all Rome, banished her to a desolate island and, when an attempt was made to release her, confined her for life in a rigorous prison.

This aspect of Roman life does not specially concern me here, but it is part of the general social appreciation, and it will be useful to outline Roman history to the accession of Constantine. From the date of the accession of Augustus and his wife, two admirable rulers, to that of the death of Marcus Aurelius—a period of nearly two hundred years—the Empire was governed by, with few exceptions, as fine a body of men as the annals of any nation will show over such a period. The morbid reigns of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian, upon which so much rhetoric is expended, occupied only, collectively, thirty years out of the two hundred.

Moreover, in the second half of this period, before even the most sanguine enthusiast looks for Christian influence, the Empire was ruled for ninety years by one of the finest known series of monarchs, the so-called Stoic (in reality Epicurean) emperors. Some distrust Gibbon when he says that this was the period when in all history the human race was “most happy and

prosperous," but a greater (and Christian) authority on Roman morals, Friedlaender, tells us that it was "an age which roused itself by its own effort to higher and purer views of morality than all the ages which preceded it" (*Roman Life and Manners*, III, 280); and Mr. T. R. Glover, the most learned of living Christian apologists as regards Roman history, says that "the second century A.D. was perhaps the period when a greater proportion of the civilized world had a better government than at any other time" (*The Influence of Christ in the Ancient World*, p. 13). The title of Glover's book may wrongly suggest that he here finds Christian influence. On the contrary, even his claim of influence at a later date is of the vaguest and feeblest description.

After the death of Marcus Aurelius, who was the only real Stoic but socially the least effective of the "Stoic emperors," the Empire broke into disorder, and there were alternate good and bad or weak rulers for a century. But Diocletian restored the Empire and its social idealism just before Constantine fought his way to the throne. Further, all the bribery (money-gifts, promotion, etc.) and pressure that Constantine used could not bring more than a minority to the Church, and it cost his successors fifty years of drastic persecution and suppression of all other religions to convert this minority into a majority. Until then, apart from a certain influence of the bishops on legislation, which we shall see, there is no question of broad Christian action. It is the Romans of the middle or second half of the fourth century whom we have to consider in connection with the sup-

posed social effects of the Christian religion. And, as such special studies of fourth-century life as that of Sir Samuel Dill (a Protestant) make clear, the Romans had now reached a degree of sobriety and refinement which Christian Europe would not again reach until the nineteenth century. The tone of the patrician class in general was so altered that they, as we read in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, discussed with shocked amazement the excesses of the earlier Romans. The mass of the people had free schools everywhere, as we shall see, woman was free and respected, and men still enjoyed the more humane law and the remarkable system of philanthropy which the Stoics had created.

It may be necessary to explain, briefly, that the Empire did not owe this to its new Christian emperors. Constantine and his dynasty are as deeply stained with blood and vice as any short dynasty in European history. Constantine had his wife and his illegitimate son murdered, apparently for incest—for that the Romans drove him to build and live in Constantinople—and an orgy of murder for the succession followed his death. In short, twelve princes of his house were murdered and 100,000 men slain in their civil wars in the twenty years' struggle that followed. The only member of the dynasty whom historians fully respect, Julian, renounced the new religion with disgust.

But this improved Roman civilization still had profound social evils, and an exact inquiry into the extent and character of the influence of Christianity must consider whether, or how far, it conquered or modified these. The worst was that the Empire was based on

slavery. The several hundred thousand free citizens of Rome had a more pampered life than the workers have ever had or have in any other civilization. They received a free supply of corn for their staple food, free medical service, a free and excellent supply of water, and free schooling. They had the most superb free entertainments, sometimes costing nearly £100,000 in a day, in the Circus and Amphitheatre, and their almost free baths were immense marble palaces with spacious and beautiful halls, libraries, and gymnasia. By the laws of Diocletian they were awarded a minimum wage ; and it is again piquant to notice that the Babylonians alone can be coupled with them in this measure of justice. And, instead of the Christian day of rest being, as ignorant apologists imagine, a welcome novelty to them, they worked on only about 170 days of the 365. The rest were holidays, and hundreds of millions had been spent on building palatial baths, marble colonnades, amphitheatres, theatres, and circuses for them. The Great Circus, which held nearly 400,000 of them, gave them a free show, of the finest bloodless entertainment then known, on a hundred full days a year. From this height of freedom and enjoyment the workers of the Roman world were within less than a century of the establishment of Christianity to be cast down to a level of sordid poverty, heavy toil, and virtual slavery.

This pampered existence was, however, based on the labours of millions of slaves ; the men of alien race, generally war-captives and their descendants, who raised the free corn and toiled in the mines and galleys



and industries. How many there were in the fourth century no one has the least idea. At one time it was said that in the Greco-Roman world there were many times—one writer said thirty times—as many slaves as free men. All recent experts cut down these older figures and point out that the material from which we can make any estimate is very unreliable. In the most recent authoritative work on the subject, *Slavery in the Roman Empire* (1928), Mr. R. H. Barrow gives three expert estimates of the number of slaves in the city of Rome :

Marquardt .	710,000 free, 900,000 slaves.
Beloch .	520,000 free, 280,000 slaves.
Kahrstedt .	781,000 free, 200,000 slaves.

Marquardt's estimate is the oldest and has long been discarded. Kahrstedt's is one of the latest (1920) and most scientific ; and it fairly agrees with Kühn's estimate that of the industrial workers of the whole of Italy 75 per cent were free. Probably we should say that the best opinion to-day is that in Greece, where slaves were, as a rule, not badly treated until Christian times, the free and enslaved workers were about equal in number ; while in the Western or Roman half of civilization the slaves may have been at some time twice as numerous.

But here the question of date is again important. The great mass of the Roman slaves in the days when they were most numerous were war-captives, mainly Teutons and Slavs. The Romans, let me repeat, were only a few centuries out of barbarism in the days of Cæsar, and it was possible to represent that enslaving

a captive was a humane advance upon the barbaric practice of cutting his throat. That is, in fact, how apologists explain the similar practice of the Hebrews, unrebuked by any moralist in the Old Testament. And the formidable wars of the Romans in the second and first centuries B.C. had brought vast numbers of captives to Rome. A single frontier war would yield 100,000. But all experts recognize that this chief source of slavery shrank materially from the beginning of the Christian Era, and the numbers of slaves fell. The last great haul was Titus's capture of 97,000 Jews. Glover observes that from the second century A.D. onward there was a scarcity of slaves. Barrow, who has probably made more careful research than any, says that by the end of the second century A.D. the great slave-tilled estates, their chief area of work, were considerably reduced. In other words, the worst days of slavery were long over when, in the fourth century, Christianity began to rule the minds of princes and of slave-owners.

Barrow says that, apart from the shrinkage of the main source of slaves, "slavery failed because it was expensive and inefficient and was gradually realized to be so" (*Slavery in the Roman Empire*, p. 97). We shall see that this is one of the real causes of the great reduction of slavery—it was not "abolished" until the nineteenth century—in the ancient world which the modern historian or sociologist gives us instead of the old type of moral rhetoric, but let us first realize that the condition of the slave also had been profoundly altered long before there was any Christian influence. By all means let us be reminded of the

brutalities of some of the earlier Romans : of the way in which the slaves on the great estates were treated worse than cattle, of the irresponsible cruelty of masters and mistresses in some of the mansions, and so on. Much of this is exaggerated. When we are told, for instance, how in fits of temper patricians would fling their slaves to the fishes in their ponds, we should know that only one such master is known ; and he was certainly not a Stoic as Dr. Harrison makes him. Nor do the apologists go on to tell how, when the Emperor learned this practice of Vedius Pollio, he had his fish-ponds and bowls destroyed. The case is mentioned with burning indignation by Seneca (*De Clementia*, I, 18), and that moralist induced the Emperor to pass a law compelling magistrates to examine charges of cruelty brought against their masters by slaves.

Here, in fact, is in brief the record of these " callous pagans " in connection with slavery. In 82 B.C. the Cornelian Law forbade the murder of slaves. Fifty years later the Petronian Law forbade masters to send slaves to fight in the amphitheatre. With the close of the civil wars and the founding of the Empire—still twenty years before the birth of Christ—there was an improved moral tone, as all historians find ; and, when short periods of debasement led again to excesses, Seneca induced Nero, while he still had influence over him, to pass the law protecting the slave from cruelty. Like every other Stoic and Epicurean teacher, Seneca pleaded for the kindly treatment of slaves. In one of his letters (XLVII) he exclaims : " Slaves ! No, lowly friends." It is a repetition of the words of Epicurus himself.

There then opened, as we saw, the ninety-years period of the Stoic emperors, and, short of abolishing slavery, everything that was possible was done for the slave. Since we are now told that the reason why Jesus, Paul, and every Christian writer or leader for a thousand years refrained from condemning slavery was that they saw that it was economically impossible to abolish it—as if Jesus and Paul ever glanced at the economic order—we shall hardly blame the emperors for not doing so. Yet the pagan moralists did condemn it and demand its abolition. Now that the *Orations* of Dio Chrysostom are available in English any person may verify this. He was the greatest orator of his age (about A.D. 100), a warm friend of the Emperor and of great influence with the aristocracy. Yet in his fourteenth and fifteenth *Orations*, which were delivered in a public hall in the Forum at Rome, he explicitly and at great length condemned slavery as unjust. About the same time lived Pliny the Younger, and from his extant letters (VIII, 16, etc.) we learn that even the agricultural slaves were now treated with consideration. The Emperor Hadrian, an Epicurean, suppressed the practice of housing slaves underground, renewed the laws which punished the murderer of a slave or the master who sent them to the amphitheatre, and banished a wealthy lady for cruelty to her slaves. The Emperor Antoninus Pius decreed that if a slave fled from a cruel master and embraced an altar or a statue of the Emperor, he should go free.

It is in reference to this prolonged period of social idealism that Sir Samuel Dill, who gives us a masterly

study of it in his *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, says that "the slave class of antiquity really corresponded to our free labouring class" (p. 18). In the same appreciative vein he describes pagan life in the fourth century in his *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*. And we must not suppose that in the troubled intervening period the social idealism of the Romans perished. To the third century belongs the famous Stoic jurist Ulpianus, who explicitly denounced slavery as "against the law of nature" and induced the Emperor Caracalla to forbid parents to sell their children into slavery. The Emperor Diocletian, in fine, forbade men to sell themselves into slavery and made it illegal to enslave a man for debt.

These facts, which may be verified in any recent manual on ancient slavery, show how profoundly unjust the older apologists were to the Romans and constitute a splendid social record of the Stoic-Epicurean philosophy which inspired them. What, on the other hand, is the record of Christianity? Against the outrageous claim, which is still repeated in some apologetic works and in sermons, that Christianity "broke the fetters of the slave" I will now show two facts:

1 Neither the Christian Church nor any Christian body ever condemned slavery until modern times.

2 Ancient slavery decayed from economic reasons, but slavery was never abolished until the sceptical nineteenth century

It is a miserable subterfuge to say that Jesus, Paul, and the Christian Fathers condemned slavery "implicitly," for in that case it was condemned by every

moralist who ever lived. It is frankly ridiculous to say that they were restrained from condemning it out of concern for the Roman economic world, for such a consideration is completely foreign to their minds. And it is futile to quote passages in which they urge the humane treatment of slaves, for every moralist had done this. The plain fact is that down to the year 1000—what happened later we shall see—no Christian leader, much less a Pope or Council, condemned slavery. The only attempt to reply to this statement of mine that I have seen is a claim, in a stupid little booklet published by the Christian Evidence Society, that Gregory of Nyssa condemned slavery. The writer must have known, since he quoted the words, that the book in question is published in the Migne edition of the Fathers with an express warning that leading authorities regard it as spurious. It has all the appearance of having been written by an ex-slave monk.

But there is a worse vice in apologetic literature on this subject. The writers have roamed through the vast library of the works of the Fathers in search of passages urging the humane treatment of slaves, but I do not know a single one of them who has quoted the words of St. Augustine, the greatest and most influential of the Fathers, and the only one who candidly faces the issue of the *justice* of slavery. This passage, moreover, is in Augustine's most famous work, *The City of God*, which is translated into every European language. The fifteenth chapter of Book XIX deals with slavery, *and defends it*. God created men free, but they sinned, and slavery is a just punishment in

his sight He says (to translate literally from the Latin)

The first cause of slavery then is sin—that a man should be put in bonds by another, and this happens only by the judgment of God in whose eyes it is no crime

A Protestant historian, Dr Emil Reich, who particularly studied Rome, sternly condemned apologists of all schools for their libels of the Romans On our present point he says

It is an historical fact supported by the most positive of evidence that slavery in the Roman Empire was mitigated by the noble philosophy of the Stoics and not by the teaching of the Church Fathers who never thought of recommending the abolition of slavery (*History of Civilization* p 421)

As we now see, Dr Reich did not go far enough The one Father who faced the issue, the one who had immeasurably the greatest influence, said that slavery was just He expressly repudiated the Stoic claim

What, then, do apologists who have some knowledge of history say in extenuation of this complete moral failure of the Church in face of the gravest social malady of the ancient world? In the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* the Rev Dr L D Agate writes the article on Slavery and says (p 604)

The general impression left by the attitude of the Church is that it tended to make slavery milder though not to abolish it and owing to its excessive care for the rights of the masters *even to perpetuate what would otherwise have passed away*

In the first part of this we readily acquiesce, in the sense that, like the pagan moralists (as Dr Agate

ought to have said), really religious Christians recommended humanity. But if the words are understood to mean that the Christian Emperors made any further legal reform of the institution of slavery, we cannot admit them. Dr. Agate reminds us that Constantine, unlike some of his pagan predecessors (who feared a conspiracy of freedmen), encouraged the manumission (freeing) of slaves. Yes, as a reward of conversion to Christianity; but this same Constantine undid some of the reforms by again permitting parents to sell their children into slavery, allowing the finder of an exposed child to rear it as a slave, and decreeing that if a Christian woman had intercourse with a slave both should be put to death.

The apologist Mr. Brace (*Gesta Christi*) says that the Emperor Gratian passed a law giving freedom to slaves who informed against "those guilty of certain capital offences." The truth is that Gratian offered liberty to slaves who gave information about *plots against himself*, but he ordered that they be burned alive—a barbarity unknown to the pagan emperors—if they brought any other charge against their masters. Next Mr. Brace tells how Justinian ordered that slaves be decently married. It is rather ironic to boast that this was done only two hundred years after the triumph of Christianity (by imperial decree) in the Greek world—they had meantime continued to be coupled like cattle—but, as Dean Milman showed long ago, this new slave-arrangement was not regarded by the Church as real marriage until the ninth century. Dr. Agate asks us to admire how Justinian in his famous Code echoes the feeling of the Stoic jurists that



slavery was "against the law of nature." But he would have found on closer inquiry that this Code was compiled, not by the hand of Justinian himself, but by the last of the great pagan jurists, Tribonian.

By this time, the sixth century, the vast ancient system of slavery in Europe was in ruins. But this was not due to the pressure of moralists of any school. The system fell, inevitably, with the economic fabric of which it was a part. The barbarians wrecked the Empire, annihilated the government that had controlled millions of public slaves, and destroyed the fortunes of the wealthy. No man was left who could, as in the old days, own his thousands of slaves. In the year 300 there were probably still 20,000,000 slaves in Europe, but in the sixth century there were not 10,000,000 people of all classes and ages. Thus ancient slavery, the slavery of tens of millions, was destroyed by notorious economic causes.

It would now have been comparatively easy to abolish slavery. In the appalling chaos of the fifth century the troops of slaves first broke away and dispersed, then, owing to the famine-conditions, returned to serve wherever labour was reorganized. The barbaric chiefs and their "nobles," and the decayed gentlefolk who survived here and there in country mansions, were all Christians. But the only words that fell from consecrated lips were as harsh as ever. The contemporary priest Salvianus tells us that the Christians treated their slaves worse than the pagans had done. Paulinus of Pella quite naïvely admits that men of his class, survivors of the old nobility, regarded it as no sin to have intercourse with their

female slaves. The churches and monasteries owned slaves. The greatest Pope of the fifth century, Leo the Great, aristocratically ruled that no slave could become a cleric lest his "vileness" should "pollute" the sacred order; and it is only by omitting the word "pollute" that apologists can pretend that *vilitas* does not mean "vileness." The greatest Pope of the sixth century, Gregory the Great, was the richest slave-owner in Europe and forbade slaves to marry free Christian women. Ingram quotes Gregory saying that slavery is "against nature," and would have us believe that this "celebrated declaration" represented "the general attitude of the priesthood toward slavery." If he had read Gregory's letter (VI, 12) more carefully, he would have seen that the Pope is merely freeing two slaves who have money and promise to leave it to the Church. No case is recorded in which he freed one of his tens of thousands of slaves without payment. So the great crime was sustained. We will resume the story in the fourth chapter, and we shall find with Dr. Agate—who says only what the Catholic historian Muratori had shown in detail long ago—that the attitude of the Church "tended to perpetuate what would otherwise have passed away." Slavery is the last word that any Christian apologist ought to mention.

CHAPTER III  
EDUCATION AND THE POSITION OF  
WOMAN

WITHIN the limitations of this book it will not be possible to examine at equal length all the claims of the apologists. I have dwelt at length on this issue of slavery because it was the most terrible evil of the ancient world, and because not a manual of apologetics appears without renewing the claim in some form, while the more popular books and sermons still affirm quite blatantly that Christianity abolished slavery. The facts are now given in a dozen special historical works on slavery, and one is amazed at the persistent refusal of so many religious writers to consult them. But the second and third major claims of the apologist—that the new religion gave the world schools and uplifted women—are equally, if not more reckless. One can rhetorically plead that the Christian principle of brotherhood *must* have helped the slaves ; especially if one is ignorant that it was not in the least distinctive of the new religion and that such divines as Augustine declared it to be quite consistent with slavery. One might even argue, if one ignores the historical facts, that the Christian teaching *must* have uplifted woman. But the claim, which few apologists omit, that Christianity promoted education

is a particularly audacious defiance of the facts and is not even involved in Christian principles.

The truth may now be read in a dozen manuals of the history of education (Compayré, Boyd, Duggan, Monroe, etc.), and about the broad facts there is no dispute. The life of St. Augustine alone ought to inform any man how splendid was the system of education, comparatively to earlier ages, the Roman Empire had created. Practically all the children of the free workers had gratuitous elementary instruction, for the law compelled the municipalities to provide schools, and there was a very liberal provision of free secondary or "grammar" schools. Augustine, born in the year 354, found schools of both types in the small Roman-African town in which his parents lived. A network of them covered the Empire. Then there were many higher or university schools—Augustine attended one at Carthage—to which selected youths of sixteen passed, and the poorer had not to pay. And besides these there were, in cities like Rome, Milan, and Carthage, large numbers of private colleges—one on the Capitol at Rome had thirty masters—which were so frequented by sons of the wealthier that the more famous teachers made about £4,000 a year. At Alexandria were the most famous schools of all, in which Greek science and philosophy still sheltered until the monks murdered the great teacher, Hypatia, in 415 because she disdainfully refused, in spite of the law, to profess to be a Christian. At Athens the old schools of philosophy kept the flag of Greek culture flying until Justinian suppressed them in the sixth century.

These facts are now as securely established as the wars of Julius Cæsar, and it is equally well known to historians of education that the Church was, quite naturally, bitterly opposed to the entire system. The schools were almost wholly occupied with pagan literature. Very few of the better-educated Romans would join the Church, as Augustine complains, and the great schools of Alexandria and Athens were the last strongholds of the free spirit. To protect its own youth, especially in learned Alexandria, the Church had been compelled to open a few religious schools; but to tell the public that Christianity "gave the world schools" is, in view of the Roman system I have just described, a confession of remarkable ignorance.

This fine educational system of the Empire inevitably perished in the general political and economic collapse, and we need not enlarge on the way in which Christian mobs, led by monks or bishops, hacked and burned the last lingering traces of it. And it need not be said that in view of the terrible impoverishment of Europe after 450 it was quite impossible to set up a new educational system, in which the works of Jerome and Augustine might replace the pagan classics. So much we grant, but the conditions of the time do not in the least explain this appalling fact: that during the next five centuries you could count on your fingers the number of schools that existed in the whole of Europe in any generation. D. W. Boyd, who is far from anti-clerical, says in his *History of Western Education* (1921) that we cannot trace the existence of a single school in Europe in the year 500. Denk, who holds that the best-preserved province was

Gaul, has given us the results of his laborious research in the literature of that province (*Geschichte des Gallo-Frankischen Unterrichts*). Yet in the sixth and later centuries he finds only a few little schools, and these give only religious instruction. With this Dr. J. B. Mullinger, who has covered the ground from 450 to 850 in his *Schools of Charles the Great*, entirely agrees. Only a few schools for teaching priests and monks existed, and even these were in decay when, in 789, Charlemagne ordered the bishops and the monks to open schools. How many were opened we have not the least idea, but we do know that the bishops closed them as soon as Charlemagne died, and the people of Europe remained illiterate and weirdly ignorant to the extent of 99 per cent until about 1100. Apart from small and temporary local enthusiasms, that was the condition of Europe generally. What happened from 1100 onward we shall see later.

For these facts, on which the educational experts are agreed, we obviously require some other explanation than the fall of Rome. And it is easy: the Church opposed education and disdained secular learning. To rebut this some writers quote the Christian schools and scholars of Alexandria—not mentioning that, as Origen says, they were shamed into doing something by the pagan taunts of their boorishness—and the early works of Augustine. The truth is that Augustine, when he became a bishop, scorned all learning, called Plato “a fool,” and taught that “it is the ignorant who enter heaven.” I have traced his degeneration in my *St. Augustine and His Age*. Tertullian, Lactantius, Jerome, and other Latin Fathers

were just as scornful. Dr. H. A. Mann, in his *Lives of the Popes*, has the audacity to quote praise of learning from a work that purports to have been written by Gregory the Great. Not only is this work admitted to be a forgery, but we have a genuine letter (XI, 54) in which Gregory sternly rebukes a French bishop for opening a school for secular learning, and calls his action "horrible" and "execrable." According to John of Salisbury it was Gregory who burned at Rome the last collections of the older Roman works.

That is another aspect of the work of the Church. Libraries of from 100,000 to 700,000 books existed in the Greco-Roman cities until the fifth century, preserving all that the race had won in science, philosophy, and history. They were all destroyed by the Christians. The largest of them all, that of Alexandria, was destroyed by the same monks and mob who murdered Hypatia; for the story that this library was burned three centuries later by the Arabs is a very late and now discredited fiction. All that was preserved in Europe of Greek science were a few badly garbled fragments in the school manuals of one or two Italian writers. Thus the most promising of all human developments was stifled, and it was from the East that the Persians and Arabs had four centuries later, to get the works which inspired them to resume the study of science. Any man who asks us to be grateful to the Church because Cassiodorus or Martianus Capella preserved a few crumbs of Greek science while their fellow-Christians destroyed all the rest must have the apologetic type of mind.

As to the fiction that the monks preserved the

classics for us, it is now mildewed in every serious library. Catholic writers still repeat the assurance of their superficial Montalembert that "without these copyists we should possess nothing—absolutely nothing—of classical antiquity." But the highest authority on the subject, Professor Heeren, finds that there was not a monastery in Europe that "rendered any service whatever in connection with classical literature" (*Geschichte des Studiums der classischen Literatur*, p. 101). It is now agreed that of the vast whole of Greek literature only one work of Aristotle at the most was preserved in Europe, and any student ought to know that the "preservation" of the Latin classics was such that at the Renaissance it took scholars a hundred years of industrious search to get together a partial collection of them. It is rather silly to imagine really religious monks preserving for the world the works of Terence, Plautus, Ovid, Martial, Horace, Catullus, etc., which are now offered us as proof of the indecency of the Romans; and the vast majority of the monks were idle and ignorant parasites. Compayré shows that at the end of the thirteenth century—the great period of the Catholic universities—there was not a single monk in the largest monastery in France, St. Gall, who could read and write. As to their libraries, about which so much nonsense is written, there was not a library in Christian Europe for a thousand years that contained 10,000 works, whereas the Alexandrian Library in the fourth century and the royal Arab library at Cordova in the tenth had each more than half a million.

Not much better is the claim that Christianity ren-



dered an invaluable service to the child by suppressing infanticide and the exposure of unwanted children. Lecky's treatment of the former, which he calls "a crying vice" of the Empire, is lamentable. In support of this grave statement he gives only a few facts scattered over many centuries. There was no such crying vice, certainly not after the first century. On the contrary, not only was it murder in Roman law, but the killing of infants was precisely the most indignant charge that the pagans brought against the Christians.

The exposure or leaving in public places of unwanted female infants, which would then be collected by baby-farmers and reared for slavery or prostitution, was a more serious evil. But the apologists even here distort the facts. Dr. Harrison illustrates "the deadness of the Roman conscience on this subject" by saying that the very character in Terence who utters the familiar line, "I am a man, and nothing human is alien from me," goes on to blame his wife for exposing instead of killing their infant daughter (*All That Jesus Began*, 1934, p. 66). He might have mentioned that this was written 450 years before Constantine's accession, and that, as he ought to have noticed in Lecky, from whom he borrowed the fact, Chremes, the father in the play, scolded his wife because the child would now be reared as a prostitute. To a Roman, not believing that a child had an immortal soul, extinction in pre-conscious infancy seemed preferable to maintaining a life that was destined for either slavery or prostitution.

We should certainly expect a religion which said,

not only that the infant had an immortal soul but a soul that could be damned for ever if it were not baptized and reared a Christian, to put an end to exposure. But there is not the least positive proof that it did. Dr. Harrison says that "it was not until the reign of Valentinian I (A.D. 364-75) that exposure was condemned as murder." But in one of the best authorities on the subject, Pauly's *Real-Encyclopædie* (article "Aussetzung"), we read that it is only a probable interpretation of the law of Valentinian and Valens that it imposed capital punishment for exposure as well as infanticide, and that the law had this effect only because the Stoic jurist Paulus had in the reign of Alexander Severus laid it down that the exposure of children was murder (*Dig.*, XXV, 3, 4). The passage of Paulus is given in Lecky (II, 12) and is singularly overlooked by Dr. Harrison, who has made so much use of Lecky. As to Dr. Harrison's "two hundred years of legislation on the subject between the days of Constantine and Justinian"—Constantine's only law was reactionary, and the only other was that of Valentinian—he must mean church-legislation, which is misleading. There is no historical evidence of a change in Roman practice after the establishment of Christianity, but we may assume that when, in the fifth century, the population of Rome and other cities fell to one-twentieth of what they had been, the practice would be reduced.

On the other hand, the claim that Christianity redeemed the Romans of their callousness by suppressing the gladiatorial games is a piece of rhetorical deceit. It is chiefly based upon a pretty story of a

monk, Telemachus, throwing himself into the arena at Rome in protest. Those who repeat the story do not add that the monk is supposed to have been killed by the Christian mob, but the story is worthless. It is given by no Roman writer of the time—it is found first in a half-century later and unreliable Greek—and there is no St. Telemachus in Roman lists of martyrs. And it is historically false that the games were suppressed in 404 ; though even this is ninety years after the bishops began to have influence over the emperors. The games, which cost enormous sums, were doomed when the wealth of Rome was dissipated ; but Salvianus (VI, 2) describes them in Christian Gaul about 450, and in the East, where there was no invasion by barbarians, they lingered, like the indecent shows of the theatre, long afterwards. It is, in fact, almost humorous to make such a claim when, as everybody knows, animal-fights, duels (often consecrated as ordeals), bloody tournaments, etc., were amongst the most cherished diversions of the Middle Ages, and seeing that the Greeks had none of these barbarities until the Christian emperors introduced them.

Yet all these old claims are renewed every few years in apologetic literature, with a fine indifference to modern historical research. You find them in all their rustic health in C. D. Eldridge's *Christianity's Contribution to Civilization* (1929). You get the glorious story of Telemachus, the Christian mitigation of the horrors of slavery, the Christian suppression of infanticide and exposure, the Christian promotion of education, the Christian service of woman through " those enthusiastic champions of womanhood " the knights

of the age of chivalry . . .” We shall see later what history and literature now have to say about the knights and their ladies. It would give a painful shock to our Eldridges. But the idea that at least the Church redeemed woman from some sort of dark indignities she had suffered in pagan days is so common that a page must be given to it.

The truth about the change in woman's position in Christendom has been candidly described so often, especially as most of our feminist historians were anti-clerical until the cause became prosperous and attracted the clergy, that the loyalty of our women to the Churches seems ironic. The broad truth is that, just as the millions of free literate workers of the pagan world were replaced by the massively illiterate serfs of the Middle Ages, so the free woman of Roman days gave place to a womanhood suffering atrocious disabilities, social and legal, from which the sex has been delivered only in the last century. In Egypt and Babylonia woman had been the equal of man, and we may almost say the same of the Hittite, Assyrian, Syrian, Cretan, and Phœnician women. In Judæa alone, in that ancient world, was she unjustly treated ; and now even a Labour daily gives its readers a series of articles on “ Women of the Old Testament ”—mostly fictitious—including a harlot who for a price betrayed her city.

The Greeks and Romans had begun with a tradition of masculine tyranny, but the women of the Greco-Roman world had won justice before Christianity was out of its swaddling clothes. Election-appeals signed by women in the first century were found on the walls

of Pompeii, and women (Livia, Agrippina, Plotina, Julia Mamæa, etc.) played great parts in imperial history. In the fourth century the wives of the finer patricians, who were often priestesses of Isis, were independent and respected. They were angels in comparison with the types of women who would presently appear in Christian Gaul and Italy or in the Byzantine world. Greek ecclesiastical history particularly extols the Empress Theodora, the Empress "the most pious" Irene, and the Empress St. Theodora; the first was an ex-prostitute of ungovernable temper and no scruples, the second had the eyes of her own son (and of thousands of others) cut out, and the third had her son educated in debauchery and her archbishop blinded.

There is, in fact, only one ground on which one can give the least plausibility to the claim that the new religion helped woman—it takes a very ignorant man to say, as the Bishop of London does, that Christianity was "her best friend"—and that is the plea that amongst the licentious pagans she had been no more than "the creature of man's lusts," and that in regenerating morals the Church won new respect for her. That plea is fantastically untrue. Every Christian preacher and writer of the period of transition—Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Salvianus, etc.—gives us clearly to understand that there was no improvement of the general level of character. Even the gentle Lecky says (II, 7) that "the two centuries after Constantine are uniformly represented by the Fathers as a period of general and scandalous vice." Salvianus (*De Gubernatione Dei*), who surveyed the

Christian world when the change of religion was complete (about 450), emphatically and repeatedly says that there is no improvement but some degeneration. And the next picture we have, Gregory of Tours's *History of Gaul* in the sixth century, is as revolting a calendar of vice and violence as one can imagine. After that, as we shall see, all Europe sank into barbarism.

Let me give one illustration how the pious fiction is—sometimes innocently—sustained. Writers take certain letters of St. Jerome and from these derive a picture of a few—about a dozen in all—very devout and charitable ladies who were his pupils in Rome. Here, of course, is the new Christian womanhood. But in some of the very letters which he sends to these women Jerome describes the body of Roman Christians, men and women, priests and laity, as quite generally and remarkably corrupt. His letters insist so often on the comprehensive corruption of Christian Rome in the latter part of the fourth century—that is to say, immediately after the forcible conversion of the Romans—that you will not find a translation of them in the various English libraries of works of the Fathers. And there is ample confirmation. In a Latin petition (published in the Migne Collection) of two Roman priests to the Emperor in the year 366 it is related that in one of many struggles over the election of a Pope 160 corpses were left on the floor of a church. The sermons of Augustine in Africa and of Chrysostom at Antioch and Constantinople reflect the same low general character. Chrysostom, the greatest Christian orator, complains that the people

will not come to hear him preach on sexual morals : that their sins are " more numerous and more heinous " than those of the pagans ; and even, referring to the ancient Sodomites, that " now ten thousand sins equal to and even more grievous than those are committed."

There is, then, neither in the contemporary Christian writers nor in modern historians the least justification of the claim that morals improved when paganism was suppressed, yet no claim is more persistently made by the apologists, none more widely believed, than that through the regeneration of morals Christianity secured, as Dr. Fairbairn says, " a new respect for women." Pictures of vice in Roman life two and even four centuries before the triumph of Christianity are pressed upon the reader. Bits of anti-aristocratic gossip in Juvenal about a class and age to which he did not belong are, against the warning of all authorities, given as history, and no one reproduces Sir Samuel Dill's assurance that " in his [Juvenal's] own class female morality was probably as high as the average morality of any age " (*Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 76), or the even more weighty verdict of Friedlaender, another Protestant :

There is nothing to show that in Imperial Rome shamelessness ever went so far as it did in Paris about the middle of the eighteenth century (*Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms*, I, 431).

But I have given the full evidence in my *History of Morals* and *History of the Roman Church* and cannot enlarge here.

There was no change in the position, socially or

legally, of woman when Europe became Christian. No attempt has been made to produce one scrap of positive evidence of such a change. If there were any change, it ought to be for the worse, for the Fathers had almost uniformly used very dark language about woman as the cause of sin and of the curse of the race. But the robust women of the new Teutonic nations would not suffer it, and strange types of womanhood—the fierce Gallic princesses of the sixth century, the licentious noble women of Papal Rome in the tenth, the aggressive women of the courts of love and chivalry—continued for centuries to hold hectic and commanding positions in history. It was only when the spirit of the Fathers prevailed, when, from the eleventh century onward, a reformed Papacy got control of life, that woman, as we shall see, sank into the position of subjection and humiliation from which she has only recently been rescued by a less religious generation.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE SERFS OF THE DARK AGE

ONE is suspected by some of unscholarly partiality, of ponderous prejudice or, in the modern jargon, stubborn complexes, when in chapter after chapter one proves that the claim of the apologists is entirely unsound. But it is surely not impossible that these critics are themselves under the influence, if not of the apologetic literature itself, at least of the kind of literature which lazily and uncritically repeats the convention that somehow Christianity is in large part responsible for the unique progress of the Christian or white nations. This convention was rarely critically examined by the older historians, and more recent historians either confine themselves within such narrow limits of research that their opinion on the broad issue is worthless or do not find it prudent to affront the tradition. But the pressure of a sceptical age has compelled the theologians themselves to develop enormously that branch of their science which they call apologetics, and one of the primary tasks of this is to show from the historical facts that Christianity did actually help in the creation of Western civilization.

It is one of the most confused, most slovenly, and most reckless branches of literature. It has been

one of my more painful duties to read every such work of importance that has appeared in half-a-dozen languages during the last fifty years, and no one who has this broad acquaintance with the literature can do other than pronounce it entirely bankrupt. I will give here one illustration. Probably the ablest and certainly one of the most honourable of such apologetic writers is Canon Streeter. In *The Spirit* (p. 358) he says :

The greatest blot on the history of the Church in modern times is the fact that, with the glaring exception of the campaign to abolish slavery, the leaders in the social, political, and humanitarian reforms of the last century and a half in Europe have rarely been professing Christians, while the authorized representatives of organized Christianity have, as often as not, been on the wrong side.

We shall see later the historical fallacy on the ground of which Canon Streeter claims for the Church a share in the abolition of black slavery ; but listen to the words about it of an equally distinguished American apologist, Loring Brace (*Gesta Christi*) :

The guilt of this great crime rests upon the Christian Church as an organized body (p. 365).

He says expressly that " the very worst sin of the Churches is not helping abolition," and he then restores the credit of Christianity by claiming just those services which Canon Streeter comprehensively rejects. And on top of all this confusion, as if he had never heard of it and never read the serious literature of social history, the very latest apologist, Dr. A. W. Harrison, one of the leading

Nonconformist divines, says (*All That Jesus Began*, 1934, p. 53) :

From the Churches came the early leaders in the trade union movement and the co-operative societies : from them also came the inspiring challenge of the Christian Socialists and *the bulk of the men of strong character and personality who led in the high road of reform.*

And this is the last word in apologetics, written by the head of one of the chief colleges for training ministers, published by a body which claims to have 300,000 university students as members !

Since Dr. Harrison gives more space to slavery than to any other issue, those who suspect me of ignoring what is sound in the Christian claim will care to know what facts he opposes to those I have given. Let me premise that there is a peculiar difficulty. Dr. Harrison makes statements which flatly contradict those I have quoted from the leading experts, but he never gives exact references to any authorities. He quotes Lecky copiously, omitting what does not harmonize with his statements, and other writers, but never gives the reference : a singular proceeding in a book which is, it seems, intended for university students. We are told, for instance, that "it is in connection with the Church that we find the first traces of elementary schools." We learn that Christianity first built orphan asylums and "created hospitals." He tells us that "the last gladiatorial show" was held in 404, that the Tele-machus story is sound, and that "a new standard of purity" and a great improvement in sex-morals came in the fourth century and elevated woman.

And for all these surprising revivals of legends which were, we thought, discredited decades ago we are not offered the least authority or testimony of facts.

However, let us get back to slavery and serfdom. Dr. Harrison assures us that the new Christian teaching was "a death-blow to slavery." Since he himself tells that it lingered in Christian Europe until the thirteenth century and began again in the sixteenth—I will show that it was really continuous to the nineteenth century—we feel that "death-blow" is not a happy expression. "Slavery," he says, "can never thrive side by side with real Christianity." It seems to have thriven remarkably both in Catholic and Protestant lands until the sceptics of the eighteenth century began the agitation for its suppression. But let us take the positive points of the matter.

Did Jesus or the Church condemn slavery? No, he says, they were too wise to make a "frontal attack" on it, as this "might have done more harm than good." He does not say a word about Dio Chrysostom, Ulpian, and other Stoics who did condemn it. Next, who alleviated the lot of the slave? He packs the long series of pagan enactments which I gave into a curt admission that "the humaner elements in stoicism [presumably Stoicism] had some influence in improving the lot of the slave"; then he, without giving particulars or authority, surprisingly charges Trajan with "making their lot harder"—in the best of the Stoic days. But it was the Christian emperors who "steadily improved the lot of the slave by legislation"—he does not give a single law that I have

not given—and at last a great Christian leader in the ninth century, Theodore of Stude, forbade Christians to hold slaves. You may not have heard of this philanthropist or even of Stude (which never existed). Theodore was the Abbot of the Studium monastery at Constantinople and had as much interest in social questions as Simeon Stylites. What he really said about slaves I cannot say, as no reference is given, and the index to his weird works does not mention them. Dr. Harrison has the grace to refrain from claiming that this abolished or materially checked slavery, but he says that by the twelfth century it was rare and in the fourteenth it had “almost disappeared.” The truth is that Venice and other Christian cities were very industrious in the slave-trade until the fifteenth century. They then ceased, not from religious reasons, but because the Turks ruined their Greek customers in the East, and the Spaniards destroyed their Moorish customers in Spain ; and the Portuguese and Spaniards at once took their place in the trade by beginning to kidnap Africans.

In short, this latest apologetic effort merely shows how the fiction of Christian benevolence is maintained. The book does not give the reader the least idea how slavery was deeply modified and very greatly reduced in pagan days : it exaggerates the very slender further reforms of the Christian emperors : it keeps entirely out of sight the enormous effect upon slavery of the ruin of the Empire and its capitalists : and, above all, it does not say a word about serfdom, and leaves the inexpert reader imagining that, apart from a few tens of thousands of slaves, the workers of Europe were

now free. Serfdom is the next stage in the evolution of the workers, and the guilt of the Church in regard to it is so grave that one does not wonder that it is not impressed upon the reader. But first let us finish with slavery, as few realize that it was *never* abolished until the wicked French revolutionaries suppressed it in all lands under their flag, and other nations were inspired to follow.

Lecky had not at his command the facts about later medieval slavery that we now have, but he says in his *History of European Morals* (II, 30):

Slavery lasted in Europe for about 800 years after Constantine, and during the period with which alone this volume is concerned . . . the number of men who were subject to it was probably greater than in the pagan Empire.

Lecky here either takes serfs and slaves together or he forgets that the Slav and Teutonic nations which had supplied the vast armies of Roman slaves were now themselves, for the most part, masters and slave-owners. There was bound to be a drastic reduction in the number of slaves. But, in spite of the manumissions of which the chroniclers boast, and although the new masters, whether nobles, bishops, or monasteries, had an equally profitable means of exploiting the workers in serfdom, there were still large bodies of slaves in the strict legal sense—men, women and children who were the absolute property or chattels of their owners. It will be enough to give the facts for England.

It is one of the purple patches of apologetic literature that the eleventh-century Bishop of Worcester,

St. Wulfstan, suppressed slavery in this country. As the facts were given at length in Freeman's *Norman Conquest* sixty years ago, there is no excuse for the current and scandalous misrepresentation of them. Vinogradov estimates in his *Growth of the Manor* that there were 25,000 slaves in England when Domesday Book was compiled, or about the end of the eleventh century, and there were probably more at an earlier date. Apart from Welsh captives, these were all English Christians who had been enslaved for crime or had sold themselves or been sold by parents in the periodical famines, when they were even known to eat human bodies. These slaves were exported by the merchants of Bristol and other towns to Ireland, where they were resold to Danish shippers. Traill's *Social England*, a generally reliable work, even says that this was "the chief trade of all" in the England of the eleventh century (I, 296). The Churchmen, who had not the least mind to "break the fetters of the slave" in England, were indignant that they should be shipped to lands where they might have heathen masters, and all that Wulfstan did was to protest against this foreign traffic. Æthelred had forbidden it seventy years earlier, and Cnut had renewed the law. It was disregarded, and Wulfstan spent months in Bristol threatening the traders with hell. But it is untrue that he suppressed even the foreign trade. His Latin biographer, quoted in Freeman (IV, 386), merely says that the merchants dropped the trade "for a time," and years later we find the bishops still complaining of it.

"What the preaching of Wulstan and Anselm, the legislation of Cnut and William, failed to do" was, says Freeman, accomplished by "the oligarchic contempt of the lower classes" of their new Norman masters. They abolished slavery, but they got rid of the distinction between serf and slave by so lowering the condition of the serf or villain that Freeman calls it "the blackest and saddest result of the Norman Conquest." We shall see their condition presently. Meantime, the causes of slavery of the old Roman days were still operative all over Christendom. North and west of the Christian nations were uncivilized and pagan peoples, and, though they could not furnish the masses of war-captives which the Roman armies had made, they in each century provided fresh supplies. Men were also enslaved for crime, were kidnapped, and sold themselves or their children. An even more repulsive traffic was maintained by France and Italy than the Bristol slave-trade; though the English chronicles tell us how the English traders used to make their young-women slaves pregnant and then demand a higher price for them.

S. P. Scott says, in his *Moorish Empire in Europe*, that in the ninth and tenth centuries the monks of Verdun, far away in the north of France, did a prosperous trade in buying sons of the peasants of the region, castrating and rearing them, and selling them as eunuch-slaves to the Moors and the Greeks (through Venice). Familiar as I was with the barbarities of the Middle Ages, I found this incredible, and I made some research into the matter. It transpired that Bishop Liutprand, one of the best writers of the time,



tells us (*Antapodosis*, VI, 6) that Verdun, a town which was controlled by its bishop, *was* a notorious centre of this loathsome industry ; and, in view of the grossness of the time and the power of bishops, it seems probable that the monasteries there and in other parts of France were so engaged. The Spanish Christians, I found, used to make the Moorish Caliph presents of eunuch-slaves of this type. So slavery was maintained all over Europe, and most of all in that half of Christendom, the Greek half, which the barbarians had never entered.

Serfdom had by this time become just as profitable to the masters, and slavery shrank as the pagan areas for recruiting slaves shrank and the price rose. But it is, as I said, entirely wrong to suppose that slavery was suppressed in Europe and after a long interval restored for the American market. The Venetians were still selling slaves when the advance of the Turks ruined their Greek trade, but just at the same period, the middle of the fifteenth century, the Arabs were driven out of Spain and Portugal, and the Portuguese took over the Arab shipping and at once began raids in Africa, while the Spaniards raided what is now Algeria and Tunisia. Dr. Agate says, in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, that instead of a break between an older system of slavery and the enslaving of the Africans, to which we will return in the sixth chapter, we have "one of the most remarkable and deplorable instances of historical continuity." It is remarkable only to those who are persuaded that the spread of Christianity was "a death-blow" to slavery. All that happened was that the triumph of

the Turks destroyed the oriental trade and shipping of the Italians and stimulated the Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English to take them over. They were not forbidden by their religion to enslave, and the discovery of America gave a portentous new development to the trade.

We to-day interpret on similar economic lines what happened in Europe itself. We may fully recognize all the acts of Christian piety which took the form of manumitting slaves, but these had a small part in the transformation. It had begun in pagan days. The supply of agricultural slaves, we saw, diminished, and, besides the free farmers, a new type, the *colonus*, tied to the soil but not the property of any other man, appeared. Others, "quasi-colonists," had even less freedom. Then came the ruin of the great estates and their owners, and, in the general desolation, the ex-slaves and peasants would come to offer their services to new masters. The great majority became "serfs," which is a French form of the Latin word for slaves.

It is an extremely complicated development and must be read in technical treatises, but the summary of it is that, while there were more free men than slaves in the fourth century, *the great majority* of the workers after the fifth century sank to a condition that differs in little more than technical definition from that of the slave. The formal difference is that the slave is owned by the master just in the same sense as his horse or his dog, while the serf, though not personally owned, is tied to the soil which the master owns, can be sold with it, and is compelled to give a

considerable part of his labour to the land-owner. But there were, as Vinogradov shows in his various works on English life, very many variations of the serf's position, or of the position of the agricultural worker in general, and some of these were indistinguishable from slavery. In *Villainage in England* he shows that in the thirteenth century—the ideal century of Catholic apologists—the majority of English peasants were villains (the English equivalent of serfs), and that in law they were not tied to the soil but were the personal property of the lords and abbots, and subject to them. The State took no interest in them and excluded them from its courts, so that they were wholly destitute of the protection which the pagan emperors had given to the Roman slave. The distinction between serf and slave in its application to the majority of English workers—in *English Society in the Eleventh Century* he shows that the villains alone represent 100,000 out of 240,000 households in Domesday Book; Traill describes them as “the great bulk of the population”—is, Vinogradov concludes, “late and artificial.”

This was the condition of England and, with very considerable local variations, of all Christendom from the seventh to the thirteenth century, and of large areas of Europe to the eighteenth or nineteenth century: an ironic comment on “the brotherhood of man” and “the abolition of slavery.” The Catholic historian Guizot said that in the eighth and ninth centuries the Church was “a population of slaves”; though he need not have confined his description to two centuries. They worked from sunrise to sunset

on, Thorold Rogers shows, 300 days of the 365. Their homes were one-room earth-floored hovels, in which man, wife, and children lived and slept like pigs. Their sexual practices, as shown in the lists of sins given in such contemporary documents as the *Ecclesiastical Discipline* of Abbot Regino of Prum, would have made an ancient Roman worker raise his eyebrows. They had no redress against the officials of the land-owner except in his (or their) own court. One often finds it repeated that Schmidt has shown in his *Jus primae noctis* that it is a libel that the lords claimed the peasant bride's first night. On the contrary, the evidence in Schmidt's book shows that such a claim was common. But there was, in any case, no need to invoke legal rights against a serf. Bede tells us that in Anglo-Saxon England it was "the inveterate custom" for the noble to appropriate any handsome young woman and "sell her when she became pregnant." In many places, however, including England, the lord, even if an abbot or bishop, had the legal right to the first night, and as late as the fifteenth century we find French peasants complaining of it.

For such complaints in the Dark Age they would have been brutally flogged or have had their noses or ears cut off. The punishments and mutilations of the serfs were appalling. In 997 the serfs of Count Raoul of Evreux were stung into revolt by his cruelty. He hamstrung all of them, impaled or burned or poured boiling lead over some, and cut out the eyes or broke out the teeth of others. A German noble had forbidden a peasant girl to marry, but she mar-

ried, and she and her man fled to the altar. The noble promised that he would "not separate them," and when they came out of the church, he had the young pair tied breast to breast and buried alive. An Italian noble took a servant who had spilled soup over him in his own arms and put him on the huge fire in the hall. Few in those days were the Abbot Sampsons, sons of the people themselves, who held courts where even a serf could ask justice. The atmosphere was so sodden with barbaric violence that in the confessional-books we find the priest directed to ask penitents, as a matter of course: Have you cut out any man's eyes or cut off his nose, ears, or testicles? In law boiling oil and molten lead were used, weights hung from the sex-organ, eyes, ears, tongues and noses cut off, water dropped from a height upon the stomach, etc.

This side of medieval life comes under proper consideration in any inquiry into the social record of Christianity, but a few generalizations would be unconvincing, and for details I should require a large volume. I have packed two books (V and VIII) of my *History of Morals* and several books of my *True Story of the Roman Catholic Church* with such details taken from contemporary chronicles. Here let us finish with serfdom.

We will suppose that generally the serfs of the abbeys had better conditions, but, on the other hand, the clergy and monks were the last to give freedom. Their serfs were, the clerics said, "Church-property" and must not be "alienated." It was, again, economic causes that in the thirteenth and fourteenth

centuries destroyed serfdom over the greater part of Europe. Nobles wanted money to equip themselves for the Crusades, and they sold their "freedom"—we shall see what it was worth—to tens of thousands of serfs. Kings wanted their co-operation against nobles or nobles against kings, or one city against another. Many found, as Roman land-owners had done, that a free and willing worker was more valuable than a serf. So the great body bought emancipation, by money or services, and the religious manumissions, however admirable, counted for little.

But there was no condemnation by any Church, Roman, Greek, or (from the sixteenth century) Protestant. Very large bodies of serfs remained in every country. In France there were tens of thousands down to the outbreak of the Revolution. In England there were serfs until the sixteenth century; in Germany and Austria until the eighteenth; in Russia 42,500,000 serfs had to be emancipated (and pay for it themselves) under the pressure of liberalism in the year 1861. It was, however, mainly over, apart from Russia, by the end of the fourteenth century. The industrial and civic development aided the other causes I have indicated. Until the twelfth century there was little trade or money in Europe, and industrial workers were relatively few. It was an age of home industries, very small towns, and sordid poverty. In the twelfth century began the multiplication and growth of free towns, the accumulation of wealth, the development of large bodies of craftsmen. But the low condition in which the workers still were only a

hundred years ago ought to warn any man that behind all the artistic blaze of the later Middle Ages the workers still led a life which was that of a slave in comparison with the life of the old free workers of Rome or Greece.

## CHAPTER V

### THE AGE OF GUILDS AND CHIVALRY

ROUGHLY, and if one does not take the figures as other than round numbers, we may divide the history of Europe since the beginning of the Christian Era into four equal parts. During the first 500 years the older Greco-Roman civilization flourished and decayed. The next 1,000 years are the real Christian Era, the period when the Church was strong enough to silence or destroy its critics and wield such power, even over princes and scholars, as the world had never before witnessed. But this, the Middle Age—it is unfortunate that the phrase Middle Ages is so deeply rooted—is very properly divided into two parts, the first half (really, from about 500 to 1050) being most justly called the Dark Age, the second half being the Age of Recovery or the Dawn Age. From 1500 to 2000 will probably be known in time as the Age of Struggle, when (as in *Chanticleer*, which is a deliberate symbol of it) the creatures of the night made their last long and bloody fight against the light.

I pass over with disdain a few recent attempts of third-rate historical writers to prove that there never was a Dark Age. They prove only that some scholar or saint or good man here and there in the vast dark wilderness, kept his little lamp burning for a time. It



is more important to understand that life was still half-barbaric from 1000 to 1500, and long afterwards. The entire period which I call the real Christian Era (500-1500), because then only had the Church full power, is the longest and worst reaction that has broken the onward march of the race since the dawn of civilization. I have been compelled at times to regret passages in Lecky's *History of European Morals* which, severed from the context, are used in the service of reaction. But let me quote summary passages from the beginning of his second volume, when he sets out to survey the new Christian world :

Few persons, I think, who had contemplated Christianity as it existed in the first three centuries would have imagined it possible that it should completely supersede the pagan worship around it, that its teachers should bend the mightiest monarchs to their will and stamp their influence on every page of legislation, and direct the whole course of civilization for a thousand years, and yet that the period in which they were so supreme should have been *one of the most contemptible in history* (p 6)

The ecclesiastical civilization which followed [A D 550 to 1550], though not without its distinctive merits, assuredly supplies no justification of the common boast about the regeneration of society by the Church (p 7)

Lecky also at least indicates the answer to the sophists who throw all the blame upon the barbaric invaders and claim that the condition of Europe prevented Christianity from having a fair trial, and, further to redeem his memory, I give it in his own fine words :

It is often said that . . . in judging the ignorance of the Dark Ages we must make allowance for the dislocations of society by the barbarians. In all this there is much truth,

but when we remember that in the Byzantine Empire the renovating power of theology was tried in a new capital free from pagan traditions, and for more than one thousand years unsubdued by barbarians, and that in the West the Church, for at least seven hundred years after the shocks of the invasions had subsided, exercised a control more absolute than any other moral or intellectual agency has ever attained, it will appear, I think, that the experiment was very sufficiently tried (p 7).

To this I need add only two observations. The Byzantine or Greek half of Christendom was not merely "unsubdued by barbarians" but never seriously invaded, yet, as I show in my *Empresses of Constantinople*, it sank almost as speedily and almost as low as the Latin half from the Greco-Roman level, and its chronicles are full of sordid vices, murderous greeds, and savage mutilations.

The next matter, which Lecky's studies did not give him occasion to appreciate, is that in point of historical fact such efforts as were made in Europe to prevent it from sinking into barbarism or to restore it to civilization were all due to the Teutonic invaders and were hampered, and often wrecked, by the Church. I should be the last to defend Hitlerism, but when its English critics issued a pamphlet and invited Mr. G. K. Chesterton to claim in a preface that the Teutonic elements contributed only barbarism to European life and Rome was the angel of light, I willingly replied to him (*Mr. G. K. Chesterton as an Historical Oracle*). In undisputed history four attempts were made during the Dark Age to restore civilization. In the first half of the sixth century Theodoric the Goth and his accomplished daughter Amalasuntha made a noble

effort, of which fine monuments survive at Ravenna ; and the Papacy and the Greeks wrecked it. In the eighth century the Lombards from the north settled in the area that the Goths had civilized, and again made it the most advanced part of Europe ; and the Papacy got the Franks to wreck their work. Charlemagne, who completed this ruin for the Pope, was nevertheless stimulated by Lombard culture to make a fresh attempt, and his work was defeated by his clergy, in alliance with a (in his later years) hostile Papacy. And the fourth and, in so far as it started the great architectural movement, most successful was that of the German Emperor Otto I in the tenth century.

It is a notorious fact that this fourth attempt of Teutonic princes to restore civilization coincided with the hundred years of appalling degradation at Rome which the older Catholic historians bluntly called " The Rule of the Whores." Instead of Rome assisting the revival, it was so sodden with vice and ignorance, that the German emperors had to chasten it with the flat of the sword, which took many decades, and it was Teutonic Popes like Hildebrand who reformed it. Unfortunately, they went to the opposite extreme. They were ferocious puritans and sacerdotalists, deadly enemies of all lay culture and liberty, ready at all times to use every weapon, from forgery to bloodshed, to promote their aims. It was they who brought to Italy the last fierce (and most vicious) invaders from the North, the Normans, but, though for a time the Normans brutally ravaged Italy, they within a few generations gave it the greatest

constructive monarch of the Middle Ages, Frederic II, "the Wonder of the World."

Why were the Normans, who were as fierce as and in their vices more lawless than any other Northern peoples, civilized in a century, if we are to believe that Europe was kept in semi-barbarism for a thousand years because of its invaders? This small manual is just a summary of criticisms of Christian claims and cannot enlarge upon the real constructive forces of European civilization. I must be content to say that immeasurably the strongest stimulation that began to awaken Christendom from its medieval nightmare came from the brilliant civilization which liberal Arabs and Persians had now created in Spain, Sicily, and the east. It was because the Normans settled in Sicily that they were civilized so rapidly; it was because the Albigensians, or the people of the south of France, were the nearest neighbours of the Arabs of Spain that they rose to a high civilization. The full truth about the reawakening of Europe at this stage is so fatal to the legend of Christian inspiration that history is only now daring to tell it. When, for instance, Lord Acton planned the great Cambridge Medieval History, only about 50 pages out of 5,000 were allotted to the fine civilizations of Moorish Spain and Saracen Sicily—which had four times the population and a hundred times the wealth and culture of the Christian part of Europe—and, apparently, no English historian could be found to write them.

The reader will care to know that the Rationalist Press Association will shortly publish for me an adequate account of this fine civilization and its in-

fluence upon Europe. Here one word must suffice. It is that the story of the Arab civilization makes a mockery of the claim, in which too many historians had idly acquiesced, that the barbaric invaders of Europe could not have been civilized by any agency in less than a thousand years. The men who poured out from the Arabian deserts in the seventh century were even more barbaric, more savage in war and as unbridled in vice, as the Teutons and Normans. Yet within two generations they founded a high civilization in Syria, and by the tenth century, the Iron Age of Christendom, it deployed its vast wealth, its culture, and its social idealism from Portugal to the confines of India. How this taught Europe, through Spain, Sicily, and the Crusades, to be ashamed of its boorishness I must tell elsewhere.

Coinciding with this tuition there was, of course, a native economic development in Christendom. How far the creation of a high civilization in Spain, which preceded the European economic development by two centuries, influenced even this it would be difficult to estimate. But a body of ten million people, living amidst memorials of an earlier civilization, cannot remain indefinitely in squalid poverty, and, especially after the Saxon revival under Otto I and his successors, a modest prosperity slowly spread. It still took, as we saw, two centuries for this to affect the great mass of the people and liberate the serfs in large numbers. However, especially in Germany and North Italy, towns grew, wealth and trade increased, and the demand naturally arose for art and civic self-government, and presently for education.

The guilds of the town-workers, which now became a picturesque feature of city life, had begun much earlier and had an interesting origin. They appear first in the laws (Capitularies) of Charlemagne, and they appear only to be drastically condemned. Although writers on the guilds do not care to admit it, since Christian apologists are now very eager to claim the glory of the guilds for the Church, the only plausible explanation of their origin is that they were revivals of the old unions or "colleges" of Greek and Roman workers, the ghosts of which still lingered in Rome and Constantinople. Dr. Gross (*The Guild-Merchant*) will not admit this, yet he says that "the Church fostered the early growth of the guilds and tried to make them displace the old heathen banquets." What were these old heathen banquets in the ninth century, the earliest date at which the Church patronized the guilds? From the words of the imperial and ecclesiastical decrees it is quite clear. From the year 779, when the people are sternly forbidden to "conspire together in guilds" (V, 16), to the year 852, when an ecclesiastical synod at Nantes condemns the banquets of these guilds—incidentally admitting that the priests get drunk and sing ribald songs at them—we see the Church drastically condemning and trying to suppress the guilds.

Thus, instead of "fostering the early guilds," the Church—I am quoting direct from the Capitularies and synodal decrees—recognizing the pagan features that clung to them, was bitterly opposed. At last it had to permit them on condition that they were put under the direction of the clergy. It is unfortunate

that the leading writers on the guilds, whom our encyclopædias follow, never examined this earlier evidence. The development was familiar enough. What the Church could not suppress it captured and consecrated, in its own interest. Then, when the rapid industrial expansion occurred in the thirteenth century, the large guilds of the workers became very conspicuous and for a time useful features of town life. But the writers on them are agreed that within a century or two they became mischievous. They ruined towns by their conservatism and exactions. They died a natural death in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Meantime at the other end of the social scale, amongst the nobility, there occurred a development about which all apologists used to write with pride, as the more innocent apologists still do. This is seen in the troubadours on the one hand and the knights on the other, though we may take them together as the age of chivalry. The most flourishing period of this is from about 1100 to about 1300. In other words, it begins just after the reform of the Church by Hildebrand, the imposition of celibacy on the clergy, and the increasing control of life by them; and it coincides with the great age of cathedral-building, the period of the Crusades, and the busy life of the early medieval universities. But recent literary and historical experts are generally agreed that it was a free-love movement of the most defiant character, in which the women were to a surprising extent more aggressive than the men. Unfortunately, this recent study has been done chiefly in French and German works, but

the best English authority, J. F. Rowbotham (*The Troubadours and Courts of Love*), says :

Immorality was fostered *as it has rarely been before or since* by this exceeding freedom of intercourse, which at any time might bring a fascinating and brilliant stranger into the midst of a family circle and give him the privilege of access and intimate communication with every member of it.

My friend, Mr. George Moore, who detested research at the Museum, at one time got me to read for him several volumes of French troubadour poetry. I found the freedom amazing. The women, married and single, in particular, are so forward that even that eminent sexologist, Mr. Havelock Ellis, is misled into speculating that the exacting labours of the knights left them tired and reluctant. The plain reading of the literature is, as Krabbes and all other experts point out, that just in this age of cathedral-building and Crusades the women of the aristocracy, of the court of love and the field of tournament, quite generally ignored the sex-ethic.

The conventional belief in the "honour" of the knights is as little justified by the literature of the period as is the belief in the "virtue" of their ladies. Tennyson's *Idylls* is just an idealization of the later and expurgated literature of chivalry. Religious knights and troubadours and virtuous ladies there certainly were, but the extensive study of the whole period in recent decades, especially of the earlier literature, has shown that the ladies were generally immoral and the knights generally boorish, vicious, and unjust. Traill's *Social England* long ago pointed out that the knights, whom so many people (including



novelists and painters) imagine sallying forth daily to aid some damsel in distress, used, on the contrary, to violate any unprotected woman they met and robbed even the poor. The monks of Peterborough, who continue the English Chronicle, give this general description of the Norman knights after the Conquest :

They took all those that they deemed had any goods, men and women, and tortured them with tortures unspeakable ; never were martyrs so tortured as they were. Many thousands they slew with hunger . . . they robbed and burned all the villages.

And William of Malmesbury (*History of Recent Events*, II, 30, 36) tells us how they tortured women, priests, and monks to make them tell where they had hidden their money. Monks were burned alive in their monasteries. Men were smeared with honey, naked, and pegged out in the sun to attract insects. Add that these Norman knights of the cathedral-building age were more addicted to unnatural vice than Romans or Greeks had ever been, and you may have a new idea of the ages of faith.

This troubadour age and age of chivalry, beginning in northern Spain, the south of France (from which our lively Queen Eleanor came), and North Italy was—though I must admit that a few dispute this—directly inspired by the Moors and Saracens ; while amongst these there was at least great refinement, and the tournaments were bloodless. Not in Arabic literature would you find a princess, as I found one in a French troubadour song, urging her knights to “ hit the enemy in the guts and then choose amongst the most beautiful ladies of the court.” But, as I said,

the question of medieval morals is too vast to be treated here. I want to make two points clear. One is that the idea that the building of the cathedrals implies an improvement of morals and piety in Europe is very far astray. The romantically inclined ought to read a candid description of the very gross and obscene Feast of Fools, Feast of the Ass, etc., which the bishops and clergy permitted in the very sanctuaries and at the altars of the cathedrals. The second and, for my present purpose, more important point is that the troubadour movement, borrowed from the Arabs, was the chief source of the new literary and artistic life of Europe. It seized all classes. The great scholar Abelard was before his tragic experience just as distinguished for song and music as for learning. The monasteries and convents resounded with gay melody. Thus were the vernacular languages of Europe slowly forged and prepared for the use of a Dante and a Chaucer. . . . It had been nearly nine centuries since Europe had produced a book, Augustine's *City of God*, which anybody but a literary expert reads to-day.

It was a marvellous, a tantalizing and almost indescribable, world. Many years ago I gave a comprehensive picture of it in my *Peter Abelard*. On one side were the thousands of students pressing along every road, the fiery preaching of Bernard and his monks, the rich atmosphere of cathedrals : on the other hand the unbridled license of people, priests, nuns, and monks, a canon hiring men to castrate Abelard, the great scholar appealing to the law to punish the canon in the same way, monks poisoning the wine of Abelard's

chalice and lying in wait for their abbot with knives. Heloise, now a mother-superior, boasting of her monk-lover's embraces in her convent-chapel . . . Civilization, yes, but more than streaked with barbarism. The law was gross in its procedure, filthy and brutal as an ancient Chinese court in its punishments. City streets were as foul as those of villages, and epidemics mowed down millions. The Black Death killed 25,000,000 and racked the whole population. Murderous bandits infested every road. This age of artistic splendour, of crusades (chiefly for loot, as we now perceive), of saints, of superb churches, of anathemas and interdicts, was, says even the Positivist historian Cotter Morison, "an age of violence, fraud, and impurity such as can hardly be conceived now." Such is the verdict wrung from the admiring biographer of Bernard of Clairvaux, when he turns to a general study of the age.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PEOPLE IN THE AGE OF BEAUTY

CAN we find no services of the Church or of the Christian religion in this flowering of European life in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries? Of course we can. It goes without saying that in many places there were devout bishops, abbots, or abbesses who worked for justice and peace: that the new ferment of school-life helped to awaken the slumbering mind of Europe: that the rich artistic development helped to refine and gladden life, and the Church was at first the chief patron of art. But if we wish to have a serious and true conception of what social service Christianity rendered and might further render we have, surely, to be clear in our minds on two points. First, we not only fool ourselves but encourage others to continue in deceit unless we resolutely discredit false claims. Next, we must obviously distinguish between services rendered by men who were Christians and services rendered by them solely because they were Christians.

In regard to the first point I submit that the preceding five chapters have annihilated all claims of social service of Christianity to this date, or, say, to A.D. 1100. It is a quite graceful task to search the arid chronicles of those centuries for an abbot here

and there who opened a school or protected the poor, a saint who rebuked violence and injustice, and so on. But that is not history and it usually does more harm than good. Our literature is still steeped with the spurious claims of apologists, and we have to insist on broad truths and general conditions. On the balance of good and evil, the Christian religion plainly hindered the restoration of civilization in Europe. You cannot even say that it was the so-called Christians, not Christianity, who did this, for the more profoundly religious Popes, prelates, and abbots were, the more they despised culture, art (as such), social and political ethics, and all purely secular interests. No men did more at this time to check the restoration of civilization than Bernard, Hildebrand, and Innocent III, the three supreme religious figures of the age.

These men despised the artistic movement and sought to sterilize the intellectual movement, and these were the two most promising aspirations of the new mind of Europe. They are, in fact, almost the only new development we need consider. There was no material change in the brutality of law, though the ordeal was suppressed. There was not only no improvement in, but a very profound deterioration of, the position of woman, especially after the abolition of divorce. There was no new conception of humanity, for violence, mutilations, duels and local wars, delight in animal-fights, and the exploitation of the weak were as blatant as ever. Cruelty in Renaissance days often took on the form of fiendishness; and unquestionably the Christian doctrine of the vindictive-

ness of God and the new bloody zeal of the Church against heretics encouraged this.

As to the intellectual or scholastic life, it was at first a very modest ecclesiastical advance. Bishops and abbots decided to open schools for the training of the clergy, as old law bade them. There was a very rapid expansion of this when independent and largely sceptical and brilliant men like Abelard set up as teachers; when (simultaneously) news and specimens of Moorish culture spread over Europe; when (again simultaneously) the troubadour movement stimulated minds and the growing wealth and commerce set free thousands of youths to wander in search of excitement in the cities and their schools. It was all part of the new life of Europe, an outcome of the new blood that pulsed in its veins. No impulse from the Church was needed or was given, but within a single generation the Church began to check it and try to confine it to the respectful and entirely orthodox discussion of religious themes.

The ages of faith, if we give that name specifically to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—and the faith of the profoundly ignorant centuries that had preceded is hardly a thing of which one may boast—were also the first great ages of heresy and revolt. While Abelard gave the signal of intellectual revolt, his pupil, Arnold of Brescia, raised again the claim of democracy. Both were crushed by the Church, but the Papacy had to fight for a hundred years the democratic claims of the Romans themselves, and the revolt against Papal authority was never silenced. The myth of the docility of the Middle Ages is one of

the most astonishing survivals in our literature. Revolt began at once with the awakening, and in three centuries more than a million rebels against the Church (Albigensians, Cathari, Lollards, and Hussites, besides the victims of the Inquisition and of the courts that preceded it) were savagely put to death ; if we include witches (whom we now know to have been an anti-clerical organization of people of both sexes and all ages and conditions), there were probably several million victims before the Reformation occurred. From the twelfth century onward thinking Europe was bludgeoned into docility, and its new culture was sterilized. The zeal for science, which Roger Bacon and others learned from the Moors—there is not a word in Bacon's works that is not Moorish science—was extinguished. Philosophy was enslaved and made "the hand-maid of theology." The crowds that filled the universities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the numbers of which have been grossly exaggerated, were almost entirely priestlings and monkings learning medieval theology.

I have here to condense what I have shown at length, with full contemporary evidence, in my American works, and I must dismiss the subject of art even more curtly. Art always advances with wealth, and the new wealth of Europe gathered most thickly in the coffers of priests and nobles. The kings and nobles spent theirs in the adventure of the Crusades, in wars, in heavy castles that had to sustain sieges, and, when the Arabs taught them to wash themselves, in personal luxury and adornment. The Church naturally spent much of its wealth on archi-

ture and the ancillary arts ; for not a single notable church had been built in Europe for five or six centuries, while travellers told of Arab mosques which had cost, in our coinage, £60,000,000. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, we saw, cities purchased their charters of freedom and grew in wealth and numbers, and it became a matter of civic pride to have a church or cathedral which should be the finest in the land.

By that time art had burst its clerical bonds and was part of the spring-flush of the new Europe. When the Church's *patronage* of art is perversely represented as a Christian *inspiration* of the great art of the Middle Ages, we must ask the historian of art if it would not have developed if there had been no Christian Church. He smiles. It was as irrepressible an outcome of the new wealth and awakening as had been the art of Greece in the time of Pericles, of that of China under the Tang emperors. So any modern historian of art will tell you. The early evolution of the Gothic art of the great cathedrals is obscure, though we do know that the monasteries of central France which took the leading part were generally frivolous and corrupt. But there is no obscurity about the further development of medieval art. To the middle of the thirteenth century, say Woltmann and Woermann in their authoritative *History of Painting*, there were in Europe (and in the hands of the monks) only "the painting and sculpture of children." Then the arts "emancipated themselves from priestly dictation," and it was in the period of the Renaissance, strictly conceived, the



fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the least Christian and most immoral period that Italy had yet known, that "the highest beauty, which the gods themselves had, two thousand years earlier, revealed to the Greeks, now revisited earth among the Italians." Rome, the heart of Christendom, did not even patronize art until this last period, when artists painted or carved Aphrodite as lovingly as St. Catherine, and a frivolous little sceptic like Pinturicchio could use the Pope's mistress, Giulia Orsini, as a model for his picture of the Virgin on a wall of the Vatican.

These matters I must notice briefly and return to the question of the condition of the mass of the people. I have said that the laws under which they lived remained barbarous. At the very height of Rome's culture, about the year 1500, you would find civic officials bearing on a pole through the streets, amidst ribald crowds, the organ of a man who had been condemned to castration. The political regime was worse than ever, as the kings crushed the nobles and exercised a despotic authority. Through the rejection of Moorish science, which had cleansed the great cities of Spain and greatly advanced medicine and surgery, Europe remained foul and suffering. And it was only after one of the periodical epidemics or a savage war or both had removed hundreds of thousands of workers that, owing to scarcity of labour, there was any improvement of their condition.

It is a common weakness of history that it usually describes the life and deeds of only a minority of a nation. It is the statesmen and churchmen, the nobles and artists, the generals and writers, who fill the

chronicles. What reader of general history knows how nine people out of ten lived in Rome or Athens or Thebes? We begin, however, to feel that one of the most searching tests of a civilization is the condition of the mass of the people, which history has been wont to ignore, and social experts are bringing to light the misery that lay in the shadows of the great cathedrals and was scattered over the country. It must seem probable to any man who knows medieval life that the great majority of the population never saw a cathedral or any other work of art of the Middle Ages. How many of the hundreds of thousands living in the spacious country between London, Canterbury, Winchester, and Peterborough, in an age when the poor travelled afoot and never had more than a day's holiday, can ever have seen those shrines?

The misery of life is sufficiently reflected in the figures of population. During the second half of the Middle Ages, or from 1066 to 1500, the period of which the Catholic apologist is so proud, the population of this country, where people then bred like rabbits, just doubled; and it trebled during the nineteenth century alone, in spite of the ghastly industrial conditions of the first half and the practice of birth-control in the second half. The romantic idea of our medieval fathers dancing merrily on the green and quaffing real ale as they sat in clean smocks before the ale-house is as mythical as the snowy Christmas or the taller stature of early days. Life was for them, as in that ancient oriental vision, a bridge set with traps to the end of which few persevered. The average duration of life, which is now fifty years and is

steadily growing, was then, medical authorities estimate, about twenty years.

Let us realize that the overwhelming mass of the people of Europe, outside Arab Spain, were still agricultural workers. Of the 2,500,000 people of England in the thirteenth century less than a tenth lived in towns. These nine-tenths of the nation were now "free" in the sense that they did not belong to a master, but, as Thorold Rogers points out, they rarely got away from a village of sixty to eighty people. On six days a week, except on three holidays in the year, they worked from sunrise to sunset, wresting from the soil by the crudest methods the subsistence of 30,000 priests and monks, the income of their feudal lords, and the king's taxes. Of food, according to Professor Thorold Rogers, who says the best one can truthfully say for these days, there was a "coarse plenty": a small range of vegetables, salt meat (causing scurvy and leprosy everywhere) during half the year, and a coarse bread—not wheaten—in moderation. Even the nobles ate with their fingers and rarely used plates.

The home was still a one-room hovel, generally built of wattle daubed with mud, with an earth-floor (never cleaned), no chimney, and no windows. Often the pig and the few fowls shared it. Father, mother, and children simply flung off their outer garments at nightfall and lay together on the straw, as I have seen Syrian gypsies do. Even in the castles and schools straw covered the floor, and dogs fouled it—and, in short, handkerchiefs were unknown. And at night, when the gentry had gone to their chambers, some-

times six or more in a bed, sleeping in their sweaty woollen day-shirts, the retainers swept away the foul straw, and all ages and both sexes stripped to their shirts and dragged out their straw mattresses on the hall-floor. In a document of the time a lady forbids her servants to extinguish the candle with their (short) shirts to spare their fingers. Even in the inns travellers and pilgrims thus slept, in their day-shirts, without separation of sexes. Dufour reproduces in his *Histoire de la prostitution* a charter in which a noble French dame of the thirteenth century releases prostitutes who visit her small town to ply their trade from the customary tax (in coin or kind), on condition that each comes to the drawbridge of the castle and, doubtless to the great hilarity of all the men, women, and children of the town, raises her skirts and makes a very rude noise. These were the cathedral-builders.

But it is most improper to translate these Latin and early French documents for our generation, to let people see what manner of folk these really were who built the cathedrals; and, indeed, if I begin to discuss the morals of these people we shall make no progress. All the beauty and glamour of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries coincided with a grossness of taste and morals that is to us inconceivable. Let us return to the social aspect of the life of the people.

It need not be said that these ninety per cent of the people of Europe, the agricultural workers, were totally illiterate and of an incredible ignorance and superstition, which the clergy exploited. But the artisans of the towns, the members of the guilds, were

in little better condition. They had no better food than the peasant, and they had the same maladies from so much salt meat and salt fish. The streets were almost as foul as the village streets: lakes of mud when it rained, stinking in summer from the garbage and domestic superfluities which everybody flung there. At Cnossos, in Crete, I saw an excellent drainage-system, with collar-headed pipes, in a palace which had been built 3,500 years ago. No European city (outside Spain and Sicily) had any sanitary system until long after the end of the Middle Ages. So pestilence swept repeatedly, and with deadly havoc, over Christendom, and men were driven into the insanities of dancing-manias, scourging-manias, and so on. In the towns was the added terror of the innumerable thieves and cut-throats. You locked up your daughter and your money very securely in that age of piety; and even this availed little when the soldiers were on campaign or a lord and his bullies prowled the streets at night. License to rape, loot, and kill was granted to every army which in those quarrelsome days hacked its way across Europe. And when men rebelled, as they did under Wat Tyler and John Ball, and the king's men made havoc of them, the Church bade them reconcile themselves to the position in which the Almighty had placed them. When the barons had checked the power of John, one of the most brutal of kings, the Pope declared their Magna Charta a "devil-inspired document."

In our history lessons we still tell children how our sturdy peasants bore themselves at Crécy and Agincourt. We might do better to tell them how this

depletion of the country, to satisfy a stupid royal greed which the Church blessed, led repeatedly to famine, in which the people ate cats and dogs, and even human beings. There were times when the prisoners in jail were so starved that they murdered and ate new-comers. And Traill's *Social History* adds (it not being intended for children) :

Whatever the common people suffered, the upper classes were living in luxury, and most of all the monks, who were at no period more splendid in their equipages and households.

Wyclif tells us that after the Black Death had carried off in terrible agony twenty thousand out of the forty thousand people of London, the friars would not visit the houses of the poorer survivors because of "the stink and other filth." It was only such heretics as Wyclif who protested against the appalling social order, and his argument was so sound, and the attachment of the people to the Church so feeble, that a writer of the year 1390 says that half the people of England—it would be safe to say a third—followed him in his heresy. But they had dared to attack war and the exploitation of the people, and the Church united with the State to exterminate them.

So it was all over Christian Europe. Eccardus (*Geschichte des niederen Volks*) tells the story of the workers in Germany, Brissot (*Histoire du travail*) in France. The martyrdom of man—of the bulk of the people in every land—continued. With one exception. A struggle with the Popes had ruined the wonderfully prosperous and advanced civilization built up by the Saracens (Arabs) in Sicily, but until

the middle of the thirteenth century the Arabs still held most of Spain and Portugal. They had started from the barbaric level several centuries after the Anglo-Saxons, Franks, and Germans, yet by the year 1000 they had in Spain alone more people, and immeasurably happier and more prosperous people, than there were in the whole of Christian Europe. A dozen cities of from quarter of a million to a million people, several of which could have bought up Christendom, with lit and paved streets, sewerage, and admirable sanitary systems, displayed an art, a culture, a complete religious tolerance, and a social idealism that put Europe to shame. Even the tens of thousands of gay white-washed villages rang with song and music, and generally had their schools. But I must tell that wonderful story elsewhere. It must suffice here to indicate that this great Southern civilization, welcoming visitors and scholars from all parts of Europe, was the chief source of inspiration in directing the use of the new wealth and resources of Europe.

## CHAPTER VII

### SOCIAL VALUE OF THE REFORMATION

IT is part of the new apologetic of the Churches that we must not blame Christianity for the dismal failure of the medieval Church. I have just had the pleasure of a debate with one of their representatives, Dr. A. W. Harrison, Principal of Westminster Training College, whose recent work I analysed in an earlier chapter. In a clear and severely-reasoned half-hour speech I summarized the historical argument which runs through the preceding chapters. I showed that all the supposed inspiration of early Christianity had issued in, to use Lecky's words, "one of the most contemptible periods of history," and that the claim that the new nations of Europe were so refractory to civilization that the Church (or any other agency) could do no more is entirely discredited by three further facts: that the "barbarians" themselves (the Goths, the Lombards, the Franks, the Germans, and the Normans) had made five attempts to restore civilization and had been thwarted by the Church, that Greek Christendom had been as grossly barbarized as Latin, and that sceptical Caliphs had led the equally barbaric Arabs to a high civilization in a century.

These indisputable historical facts were placidly ignored by Dr. Harrison. What Europe then had, he



said, was not Christianity. It had lost sight of the teaching of Jesus ; which is in itself a peculiar reflection on the long line of Christian saints and doctors, from Augustine to Aquinas, who shaped the theology of the medieval Church. But when I insisted that the inspirational value of the Gospels must be measured by their success or failure to inspire in the actual historical world, Dr. Harrison, after a few feeble attempts to revive the old legends about abolishing slavery, uplifting woman, etc., began, almost at the last minute—I had ten minutes to reply—to claim that this medieval Church inspired the school-life, the creation of the universities, the splendid art, the literature, etc., of the later Middle Ages. And when I, in the few minutes at my disposal, pointed out that the economic development of Europe and the powerful stimulation of the Arab civilization fully account for these things, as I have shown, he in his final speech, to which I was not permitted to reply, poured out a torrent of claims for Christianity as the inspiration of our real progress during the last century and a half.

In the ninth chapter I shall show that these claims are as fictitious as the claim that early Christianity had tens of thousands of martyrs and broke the fetters of the slave or taught the Romans to have schools and charitable institutions. For the moment the chief point of interest is this : the apologist skipped abruptly from the supposed services of the Church in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to its supposed services in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. He had asked us to believe that Chris-

tianity is only really effective when it gets back to the Gospels, yet he could not formulate a single claim of social service for his religion after the Reformation, which is supposed to have been, and in large part was, a return from sacerdotalism to the Gospels!

You will find that a general feature of apologetic works. There are no services to be claimed. My friend, Dr. G. H. Putnam, says in his *Censorship of the Church of Rome*, that the immense literary activity before, during, and after the Reformation made it "an intellectual revolution": that such vast numbers of even peasants and artisans in Germany devoured the books and pamphlets that you could not to-day find any similarly large body in any country willing to take an interest in thoughtful literature. That is the price one pays for being conciliatory to the Churches and taking the word, as Dr. Putnam did, of clerical advisers. At the very time when he wrote this, several million German workers were keen readers of economic literature, and a few years ago the number had grown to nearly twenty millions.

As to the supposed expansion of education at the time of the Reformation, we can best test it in the case of England. Catholics boast how many schools had been founded before the Reformation. Protestants boast how many thousands they built in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But the fact is, and it was stated in the House of Commons in 1807, that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after all these centuries of Christian zeal for education, more than ninety per cent of the population, which means virtually the whole of the workers, were illit-

erate. There were industrial towns of 50,000 people—Oldham and Ashton, for instance—without a single school. And in spite of the coarseness, vice, and violence which inevitably accompanied this dense ignorance, the Church opposed every effort to establish a national system of schools, its chief spokesman, the Bishop of Exeter, saying in the House of Lords :

Looking at the poor as a class, they could not expect that those who were assigned by Providence to the laborious occupations of life should be able largely to cultivate their intellects.

We will return later to the fight for education, but against any claim of either Church to have served the race in this respect we have to put this brutal fact : taking Christian Europe as a whole (two or three countries were in advance of England) about the middle of the eighteenth century, fourteen centuries after the establishment of Christianity, two centuries after the Reformation, considerably more than ninety per cent of the workers could neither read nor write.

Yet that is the most confident claim that is made for the effect of "the return to the teaching of the Gospels." No one is bold enough to claim that the position of woman improved. She found, on the contrary, that the system of insulting legal and social disabilities from which the sceptical nineteenth century freed her was now completed. No new claim is made for the inspiration of art. Indeed, it is one of the most ironic comments on the claim of a religious inspiration of medieval art that, when the Reformation and (as Catholics claim) the Counter-Reformation had crushed the sceptical frivolity of the time

and restored religion, art nearly perished. Spain was only just beginning its Renaissance, and the artistic development continued a little longer in that country than in Italy, but by the end of the seventeenth century art and letters were dead in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and such art as there was in France and England was anything but religious; while in Germany the religious war blighted all culture for a century. Art perished with its real inspiration: the very fleshy joy of life of people in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

These are inevitable consequences of any sincere return to the Gospels. Art is sensual and seductive: culture leads to pride and heresy. That lesson has been drawn from the Gospels by all the men, from the second century onward, who are recommended to us as the ablest and most devout exponents of Christianity. It is only because our age would not tolerate such a religion that the other-worldly teaching of Jesus is now strained and twisted and made to regard both worlds. The most desperate, and indeed ludicrous, attempts are made to prove that Jesus did not predict the speedy end of the world, and that when he spoke of "everlasting fire," concern about which ought to overwhelm all other concerns, he really meant a temporary condition of moderate discomfort imposed by the sinful soul upon itself. The Reformers, not having such an age as ours to meet, drew the same lesson as the early Fathers. Luther, it is true, being himself a very sensual man, compromised on the subject of personal asceticism; as Melanchthon and Zwingli compromised on the

intellectual side. But the pure logic of the Reformation appears in Calvin and the Scottish, English, and American Puritans.

Nor can it be claimed even that either the Reformation or the Counter-Reformation effected any permanent improvement of morals. The latter is, in fact, one of the sorriest myths that our historians have suffered the Jesuits to impose upon them. Rome was sobered for a time, it is true, but not by virtue. The first Pope who really tried and desired to reform his Church, Hadrian VI, a Dutchman, was ridiculed into death by the Romans in a year. Then the cardinals, heavily bribed, put on the throne, to confront Luther, the unscrupulous and worldly Clement VII, a bastard of the Medici family ; and his ambition brought upon Rome such fearful chastisement by the Catholic Spanish and Lutheran German troops that the city is estimated to have lost about £10,000,000 (five times as much as this in modern coinage) in loot and to have had its population reduced by massacre, famine, and plague from 90,000 to 32,000. It was the most ghastly rape of a city even in those savage times.

It is quite true that now for some time Rome missed the sybaritic opulence which its Popes and cardinals had enjoyed for a century, yet the next two Popes, until 1553, were of the old type. Paul III was a man who had got the cardinalate because his sister was the mistress of Pope Alexander VI, and he had been for thirty years one of the most immoral of the cardinals. His successor, Julius III, was a glutton, a heavy gambler, a man suspected of the gravest vices.

But half of Europe was now in revolt, and the sins of Rome had for a time to be pushed out of sight. Then there were several reforming Popes, yet before the end of the sixteenth century the city was as licentious as ever. Rodocanachi shows in his *Courtisanes et buffons* (a study of Roman morals at this time) that the Pope's Vicar, who levied a tax for the Pope on loose women, estimated that by the year 1600 there were again fifteen to sixteen thousand of them—some openly entertaining prelates and rising to £10,000 a year—in Rome ; which means that there were as many of them as there were adult males in "the sacred city." It was the same all over Italy.

In France and Spain the old license grew even worse as the wealth of the countries increased, but we must not suppose that Protestant lands were any better. England passed into the Elizabethan age, then into that of the Stuarts, and need not be discussed. The German world was patchy. In Switzerland the Calvinists substituted their sour vices for those of the Roman Church. In Germany itself and the Scandinavian countries, grossness and license continued. The Jesuit Father Grisar has published a life of Luther and, while much of it is reckless libel, the phrases which he reproduces from *Luther's Table Talk* and *Letters* show that he habitually used speech of the very coarsest description. The Jesuit has to acknowledge that this was the kind of language used in the Augustinian monasteries in which Luther had lived, and the extant sermons of anti-Lutheran preachers like Friar Thomas Murner show that they used these gross words in the pulpit. Luther's word for women,

when they sought relief from their disabilities, is vile. Such a man could not, and did not, insist on chastity. In a letter of the year 1525 he says that it is no more in the power of man than working miracles. Though he was not consistent, he often said such things.

This aspect of life I must, as usual, touch briefly and turn to the more important issue of social morals. As few readers will be ignorant of Luther's attitude to the peasants when they rebelled, it is not necessary to say much. The fuel had been prepared by the preaching of the left wing of the Hussites, which resembled that of the more radical Lollards in England, but it was the new practice of reading the Bible during fifty years before the Reformation that kindled the flame. We have now Socialist preachers who find in the Gospels an anticipation of Karl Marx, and even the more aristocratic preacher or apologist represents that they brand all injustice. But the peasants of Germany, which means at least four-fifths of the nation, still lived in the degrading and brutalizing life which I described in the last chapter. Indeed, it was worse in Germany, for serfdom had increased with the substitution of Roman law for old German law. As the news of the new age of evangelical justice spread amongst them there were many revolts, from 1510 onward, and in 1525 the whole country, except Catholic Bavaria, saw armies of thousands of peasants armed with scythes and forks and knives, marching to attack castles and towns.

Their leaders then appealed to Luther to endorse their claim of justice, and he replied with a violent repudiation. In a pamphlet (*Against the Murderous*

*Peasants*) which he addressed to the princes and nobles he says :

Let all who are able cut them down, slaughter and stab them, openly or in secret, and remember that there is nothing more poisonous, noxious, and utterly devilish than a rebel.

Unquestionably he was playing for the continued friendship of the princes and nobles, who would have willingly returned to the Pope if they felt that evangelicalism meant the disturbance of the workers. But the way in which the horrors of that war are kept out of our literature while the immeasurably less outrages of the French Revolution are thrust upon us every year is a scandal. The "return to the teaching of Jesus" was followed by an orgy of brutality that has no parallel in the history of the Roman Empire. The peasants, from whose brutalized characters one might expect such things—the men whom Dr. Putnam imagines poring devoutly over the Bible a few years before—dealt savagely with the men, women, and often children of the landed aristocracy. But the nobles and their troops retorted with equal savagery. Molten pitch and sulphur were poured upon the peasants, and those who were taken alive were barbarously tortured and mutilated. One batch of eighty-two peasants had their eyes cut out. Of an army of 8,000, who were retreating, 5,000 were killed. Their bodies hung from trees all over Germany. In the district of Zabern in Alsace, 16,242 peasants were so hastily buried that the stench kept travellers away for years. In that one summer 150,000 persons, mostly peasants, were killed, often



with revolting savagery; and the writers who warn the world against irreligion by exaggerating the massacre of 2,000 priests and aristocrats during three years of the French Revolution, never mention this orgy of evangelical brutality. The flesh of some rebel leaders was torn off with red-hot pincers.

Luther had written that even the peasants' demand for the abolition of serfdom was "against the Gospels and robbery." The more cultivated Melancthon, to whom also they appealed, urged the nobles to "keep them down more severely than ever." And this interpretation of the gospel-message was drastically carried out. "The arm of the prince and the noble everywhere became longer, swifter, and firmer," says the German social historian Eccardus. But the whole of central Europe was soon involved in the religious Thirty Years' War (1618-48), in which there was a similar return to barbarism from Bohemia to the Baltic.

After the taking of Magdeburg by Tilly, the profoundly religious leader of the Catholic troops, the men were let loose upon the citizens. "The soldier must have some reward," said Tilly when a few horrified officers protested. In the ruins of one church were found the bodies of 53 women raped and beheaded. All the girls and women were raped, babies were flung upon the burning buildings or stabbed, and every house was looted. Of 30,000 citizens, men, women, and children, only about 4,000 were spared. Gustavus Adolphus alone refused this reward of a victory to his soldiers. The land was stripped bare when a Catholic army of 34,000 soldiers, with 127,000 prosti-

tutes (who were largely women beggared by the war) and camp-followers, moved across it like a swarm of locusts. That was one of many armies, and there were times when their advanced guard surprised some group of the wild and fugitive peasants sitting round a cauldron in which they cooked the flesh of some soldier they had trapped or even of a criminal stolen from the gibbet. Such were the savage massacres and the inroads of plague and famine that the population of Bohemia was reduced from 4,000,000 to 900,000. All central Europe was exhausted and demoralized for a century, until the enlightened reign of the sceptical Frederic the Great began.

Such facts make a mockery of the modern distinction between what the Churches did and what the teaching of the Gospels would do. Before there was any Church, in the modern sense, the early Christians passed into the fierce struggle of Gnostics and anti-Gnostics, and by the beginning of the third century we find them completely demoralized in the Roman and African communities. Then, when medieval sacerdotalism is destroyed over half of Europe, and the Bible is distributed and read everywhere, we get these unspeakable horrors of the religious war; for, whatever political interests we may now detect in it, the main issue was the triumph of Catholicism or Protestantism. Clearly the Gospel ethic is set in a frame of doctrine which ruins the promise of its better qualities. One of the most frequent unconscious ironies of the modern apologist is when he reproduces the words which someone is supposed to have said in early times, "See how these Christians love one

another," and boasts that his religion alone inspires an effective doctrine of brotherhood. How vastly different is the record from that of Buddhism.

And if it be said that the war-passions (themselves aroused by religion) choked the Christian belief of half of Europe at this time, consider what social effect the Reformation had in other countries. Thorold Rogers, the best authority, shows that the condition of the worker was worse after the Reformation in England. A wealth of which men in Europe had never dreamed—though it was still far below that of Arab lands and was paltry in comparison with ours—began to flush the veins of the nation, but the worker did not share it. As prices rose there was, Thorold Rogers says, "a conspiracy of the lawyers" to prevent the workers from combining to secure an increase of wages. The anti-combination laws, with their savage sentences, were passed to protect wealth, and the workers experienced a new type of slavery. The population increased more rapidly, and labour became more abundant and cheaper. The Civil War, reducing the supply of labour, led to a temporary improvement, but after 1740 the workers passed again into the deplorable state in which we shall find them in the ninth chapter.

It was the same in every country. The Catholic who would find an argument in this deterioration in England after the Reformation may be recommended to read Brissot's exact study of what happened to the French workers. They still had their guilds in the sixteenth century, and these helped to complete their ruin. In a word, Brissot shows, the wage of the

French agricultural worker fell from one franc and a half in the fifteenth century to half a franc at the time of the Revolution ; and prices rose, and the nobles cut down the ancient rights of the peasant to take timber, game, etc. The wage of the artisan sank from three francs fifteen centimes to two francs twenty centimes, and the purchasing power of money sank by one half. In Catholic Spain and Portugal the thirty million happy and prosperous folk of Moorish days shrank to six million impoverished and densely ignorant people, exploited by Church and State. In Italy the retrogression was almost as bad. And Popes, bishops, and theologians were as dumb, and as comfortable and generally frivolous, as the English bishops.

Indeed, all the nations, Catholic and Protestant, now joined in a viler social injustice than could be found anywhere in the pagan world at the time when Christianity came to power. I have already pointed out that the common idea that slavery was extinguished in Europe during the Middle Ages and restored in Protestant days is wholly wrong. Slavery shrank, from the causes which I gave, but it was never condemned. A large slave-trade was still conducted by those Christian nations which found it profitable when, in the second half of the fifteenth century, the advance of the Turks destroyed their commerce. But simultaneously the Spaniards and Portuguese, who now expelled the last of the Moors and took their commanding place in navigation, began to kidnap shiploads of Africans. The discovery of America soon afterwards led to the last and vilest expansion of the ancient evil.

It would have been amazing if no one in Christendom at this late date felt qualms about this brutality, but the Spanish theologians whom Isabella consulted could reply only that the Church had never condemned slavery. In point of fact, the Spanish and Portuguese had already virtually enslaved the American natives and were threatening to exterminate them by their ruthless exploitations, and the missionaries, seeing their "converts" disappear, pressed for the use of black labour. The English and French joined in the profitable trade as eagerly as the Spaniards and Portuguese. In conditions of such callous brutality that often half the Africans died on the voyage, about ten million blacks were conveyed to America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I need not tell again the horrible story. It is enough that, as one of the leading apologists, the Rev. Loring Brace, says (*Gesta Christi*, p. 365), "the guilt of this great crime rests on the Christian Church as an organized body." What there is in their claim to have helped in abolishing it we shall see later.

It is difficult to see what claim can be made of social service of the new form of Christianity, with all its insistence on the reading of the Gospels. Every authority on the condition of the workers proves that it deteriorated. Every competent feminist historian shows that woman's legal and social position was not improved. The historian of education speaks of the opening of many schools, but he admits that the workers remained almost universally illiterate. The historian of morals describes England (apart from the Puritan episode), Germany, Denmark, and Scandi-

navia, enjoying just the same license as in the fifteenth century ; and, if any be disposed to stress the personal virtue of Puritan periods, he should read Buckle on the prevalence of vice among the Scots and Rupert Brooke on the same prevalence in New England. In England, it is true, the Puritan party at first (when many sceptics belonged to it) promised to make a needed contribution to the building of English character. One of the best of them, James Harrington, wrote a social utopian work, *Oceana*, on the model of Plato and More. But it displeased Cromwell and found no favour amongst the strict Puritans. A fanatical zeal for personal morals absorbed all their energy and gave rise to a general sourness, narrowness, and so much hypocrisy that the nation recovered its freedom with ease when Cromwell died.

This was the common experience. The fervent evangelical who objects that the Church of England was no more representative of Christianity than the Church of Rome will look in vain for the appearance of any zeal for social justice amongst the strict Calvinists of Geneva. What he will find instead is such fanaticism for the doctrinal frame in which the Christian ethic is set that that particular enthusiast for the words of Jesus, Calvin, interpreted his doctrine of brotherhood to mean that heretics must be burned at the stake in the brutal medieval manner. Amongst the Calvinists of Scotland it would be ludicrous to look for social service. The condition of the workers was fouler even than in England, large bodies of them, such as the coal and salt-workers, living in a state of veritable slavery. The great body had so depressing

and brutalizing a life that, in spite of the ferocious sermons on hell, one of the leading Protestant historians says (Chambers, *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, II, 42) that sodomy itself was so rife that it "makes the daylight profligacy of the subsequent reign shine white in comparison." The subsequent reign was the extraordinarily licentious period of Charles II.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RELIGION AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

A NEW era in the history of the race opened in the second half of the eighteenth century, and the French Revolution may justly be taken as its first definite expression. It is a painful comment on the way in which we still write and teach history that the vast majority of us, cultivated or merely literate, think of this Revolution as a morbid and horrible eruption of mob-brutality. The truth is that a large and detailed work on the genuine social history of Christendom is badly needed. I do but sketch here the lines which such a work would inevitably follow. A complete study would be even more drastic, and would show that the statements which our religious literary men are permitted to impose upon the public, the conventional estimates of religious influence which adorn our editorials, are as false as the stories of the early saints and martyrs.

It is an amiable and graceful pastime to turn over the pages of this past history and pick out here and there a picture of some upright abbot or bishop who, for a few decades, saw that justice was done in his little area, some saint who really acted as if all men were his brothers. But it is a poor sort of education when there are a thousand narrowly fanatical or unjust or



dissipated abbots or bishops for every one whom we can admire. It reminds us of writers who ask us to admire a Church which (from religious motives) induces the bandits of the Middle Ages to suspend their brutalities for a week at Christmas (the Truce of God) but never condemns war, and uses or inspires it thousands of times in its own interest. The social service to the race of any agency or organization must be decided by a balance of good and evil. You do not count the copper which a thief drops into a blind man's box if he takes out a sixpence or a shilling. I could quote from genuine history a hundred instances of brutality, injustice, disservice to the race on a broad scale for every edifying page that is reproduced, very often from the lives of saints or other fraudulent documents, from the history of Christendom. Here I have confined myself to significant or typical illustrations and broad influences.

In approaching a period of real progress we should remind ourselves that the life-experience itself has in every age and clime brought about such an advance. We find it in India in the age of Asoka, who applied the humanitarian principles evolved in the ferment of the seventh century B.C. and several times in the periods of revival in China. But it is a familiar phenomenon in the story of every civilization and is wholly independent of the prevailing religious system. We should therefore expect that Europe, even if it cut itself off from the lessons of earlier civilizations, would evolve a higher ideal from its own rich experience from the twelfth to the eighteenth century. Most of us smile when we are asked to entertain the childish

theory that the rapid progress of our age is due to our better understanding of the teaching of Christ. That is a theme for Sunday Schools and Bible Classes. The ultimate root of our advance since the middle of the eighteenth century is experience of life, or the new spirit of directly consulting life instead of ancient prophets and documents; and the extraordinary failure of Europe to profit by seven centuries of tense experience before that date is one more proof of the disservice of Christianity.

For European life was still more than streaked with barbarism at the middle of the eighteenth century. The highest authority on English life at that time, the *Cambridge Medieval History* (Vol. VI), says:

The masses were ignorant and brutalized. . . . The government pandered to mob passions by public executions and by unworthy concessions to mob violence and insulted humanity by the brutal ferocity of the criminal code.

Is it not time that we dropped the word "mob" when we are referring to four-fifths or more of the nation? And it was not the "mob" that made the criminal code or was responsible for the savagery of "the bloods," the disgusting state of the marriage law, the duelling and gambling, the corruption of court and parliament, and a hundred other evils. Dean Inge, who dislikes our materialistic age, professes to admire that of Queen Anne, the life of which continued under the Georges. Thackeray knew that age and he said:

You could no more suffer in a British drawing-room under the reign of Queen Victoria a fine gentleman or a fine lady of Queen Anne's time, or hear what they heard and said, than you would receive an ancient Briton.

You certainly could not say that of the Roman patri-  
cians of the fourth century. But we shall find life  
barbarous enough at the beginning of the nineteenth  
century. Let us turn to France.

The appalling selfishness, callousness to the suffer-  
ings of the people, and unbridled extravagance and  
profligacy of the French court, aristocracy, and pre-  
lates from Louis XIV to the Revolution are well  
known, but I would advise the reading of a recent  
work by a Catholic member of the French Academy,  
Louis Bertrand's *Private Life of Louis XIV*. I will  
quote only that Bertrand asks us to be lenient on the  
ground that the king was for between ten and fifteen  
years drenched with aphrodisiacs by the agents of his  
mistress and suffered from satyriasis. Certainly the  
most lurid pages of Roman history during the short  
reigns of a few emperors do not rival the pages of  
aristocratic French history for a hundred years; and  
the Roman crowd did not include bishops and  
cardinals.

But, if you read French, turn to the Appendix to  
the thirteenth volume of Martin's *History of France*  
for the reverse of the picture. He gives the docu-  
ments relating to a great famine from 1650 to 1656,  
just before Louis began to build the Versailles Palace.  
Hundreds of thousands died of starvation, when they  
had eaten up their dogs, cats, rats, and any growing  
thing that looked edible. They dug up dead dogs  
and horses, ate their clothes, and even bit into their  
own flesh. In one small city there were 600 entirely  
naked orphans. Yet the king's officials pursued them  
everywhere for taxes and drove them out to die by

the thousand in the woods. From such soil sprang the glorious Palace of Versailles; and the bishops buried "the great Monarch," the "Sun King," and his successors with superb flattery.

No one who knows what the workers of France suffered during two centuries and how brutalized they must have been wonders that there were outrages; though, as we shall see, the number of those who perpetrated or approved outrages has been grossly exaggerated. The revolutionary advance came, as advances always come, from experience of life. We to-day proudly accept the charge that the "philosophers" were responsible for the revolution: not so much the Deists of the earlier generation, Voltaire and Rousseau, as the men who, like Diderot, D'Alembert, and Holbach, all atheists, translated their humanitarian ideals—for Voltaire's profound humanity (finely shown by Mr. Arliss in his film) had nothing to do with his academic belief in God—into practicable proposals and protests. How all this ultimately came from Deism, and that from the classical revival, cannot be discussed here. It is enough that a body of deistic and atheistic nobles and commoners (Mirabeau, Lafayette, Desmoulins, Talleyrand, Sieyes, etc.), with a few radical priests and Catholics, resisted the king's last attempt at despotism in the summer of 1789 and carried an almost bloodless revolution. That the intoxicated people broke into a few outrages in Paris and many in the provinces is not surprising. The middle-class and noble representatives of the people would never have succeeded without the support of an armed nation.

The popular idea of the French Revolution is maintained by (against all historical usage) making that name cover a period of five years. The Revolution itself occurred in the summer of 1789, and it was milder than the American Revolution which inspired it. The French accepted a constitutional monarchy and left the Church established and endowed. The leading prelates and nobles accepted it (August 4) and solemnly surrendered all their privileges. And the evils that followed are mainly due to two causes. First, the bishops and nobles repented their surrender and fled abroad to implore the Pope to brand the Declaration of the Rights of Man "insane" and beg the monarchs of Austria, Prussia, and England to destroy the French government and secure the return of their privileges. The second is that the admirable statesmen who wrought the Revolution and guided the new State bloodlessly for three years took a self-denying oath in 1791 to retire from office, and they thus innocently let in men of no experience and often of poor character.

But what followed is totally misrepresented by novelists, essayists, and even historians who are not experts on the period. French historians of great ability have in the last sixty years sorted out their legends and documents, and I must be content to give here, very briefly, the more important of their findings, as stated in Lavissee's authoritative history and the works of Professor A. Aulard. As to outrages, which began with the September Massacres of 1792, more than three years after the Revolution—there was no guillotine in France until 1792—it is agreed

that about 20,000 were killed in two and a half years, though only about 17,000 cases are definitely known. That is less than the Catholics of Paris had butchered, for no offence but religion, in a few days in the St. Bartholomew Massacre, of which no one now speaks. It is *twenty times less* than the number of unarmed men, women, and children put to death by Catholic monarchs and "mobs," with the approval and in most cases direct encouragement of the Catholic hierarchy, between 1798 and 1870 ; of which also no one speaks. I will show that in the next chapter. It is not certainly a larger number than that of the revolutionaries killed, generally with great barbarity, by the Catholics in a few months after the fall of Robespierre and, later, the fall of Napoleon ; and of that, again, no one ever speaks.

Further, it is now fully established that the excuse of the revolutionaries—that there was a dangerous royalist plot in the country—is at all events a statement of fact. In a recent study, Jean Barraol has shown that at the fall of Robespierre "sixty-four Departments, prepared by the counter-revolutionaries, rose in revolt." A force of 20,000 royalists appeared at once at Lyons alone, and over the whole of the southern provinces there was a reign of terror. Martin says that "many thousands" were killed, and that "the counter-revolution had a mixture of cold cruelty and depravity which was more hideous than the brutal ferocity of the Jacobin Terrorists." But of all this, again, no one ever speaks.

Finally, the popular idea that the victims of the revolutionaries were mainly priests, nuns, and aristo-

crats is grotesque. Of the victims of the September massacres, who numbered 1,110 (instead of the 15,000 of clerical rumour), not more than 450 were priests and aristocrats according to Walter's recent study (*Les massacres de Septembre*, 1932). Lavissee says 366. The majority of the victims were criminals and prostitutes. It was neither the government nor the people of Paris who wrought these outrages, but a few hundred butchers and other ignorant workers, mainly Catholics, who wanted to "purify Paris" as well as get rid of spies. The Cambridge History estimates that during the whole fifteen months of terror 2,628 were guillotined at Paris, and it adds that it would be "ludicrous" to believe that the killers represented more than a few thousand out of the half-million folk of Paris. You will hardly find a man or woman who does not know how the women of the people at Paris—women kept illiterate and stunted by Church and State—knitted socks while the courts pronounced sentence of death; but not one of us was ever told by our novelists and film-producers, our Chestertons and Bellocs, how, in the reaction, the educated ladies of Naples and Madrid did their silk-embroidery in court while even more savage sentences were passed.

Few will not be surprised to hear that it is now established that the great majority of the victims of the Revolution, or of the years 1792-4, were working men, who fell in the violent quarrels of parties. The analysis of the 17,000 definitely known cases shows that sixty-seven per cent were working men, twelve per cent were middle-class men, eight per cent were priests and nuns, and six per cent were aristocrats

(largely members of the secret royalist conspiracy). Deplorable as these executions were, they are mild in comparison with the appalling massacres perpetrated a few years later by the royalist-clericals, as I will show. Nor does any writer on these matters care to tell his readers how these priests and aristocrats had lit up a savage civil war in the western provinces which drew off large armies and cost the lives of 200,000 Frenchmen just at the time when every man was needed to repel the invaders in the east.

I give these facts, which are now fully established and accepted, because it is to-day a very popular trick of Christian apologetics to claim that the horrors of the French Revolution are a practical illustration of what any people will do without the restraining influence of Christianity and are therefore essential in a consideration of its social service. So recklessly is this apologetic work done, and so readily are its claims repeated in our journals and popular literature, that there is actually more talk to-day about the horrors of the Revolution, just when historians have exposed the grossness of the calumnies, than there was fifty years ago. But I must conclude this matter briefly, since this is only one page in the deeply significant and little-known story of the last hundred and fifty years.

The apologetic legend, which you will find repeated at some time or other in the editorials of every paper in England, is that the revolutionary leaders "deprived the people of their religion" and massacres and awful blasphemies followed. The prostitute-on-an-altar story is an even worse piece of fiction than the others. Contemporary Parisian papers and witnesses



unanimously report that the Feast of Reason and Liberty which was celebrated in the cathedral of Notre Dame in 1793 was a ceremony of great dignity and decorum. The clergy of the cathedral had resigned their functions and handed over the edifice. The altars were draped and not used. The lady who impersonated Liberty (not a goddess of Reason) is not known with certainty, but is one of three known ladies and very probably a leading actress from the Opéra (which organized the pageant). And what she did was, not to sing a ribald song, but to recite with great dignity the poet Chenier's fine ode to Liberty. Yet the old legend, which is a lie in every syllable, is repeated even in historical works of the last few years.

And this is not the whole of the mendacity. Decorous as the pageant was, and although the bishop and clergy of the cathedral had renounced their office, the government refused to countenance it. Roman Catholicism was still the established religion of France, and Danton and Robespierre, instead of depriving the people of their religion, were furiously assailed by the people week after week with public demands for the disestablishment of the Church, yet they refused. Even when the churches were closed by the priests and people themselves, or converted into Temples of Liberty, in nearly all parts of France, the atheist Danton refused to consent. As for Robespierre, he protested that atheism was the creed of the aristocrats and, when he removed Danton, he made his own deistic Cult of the Supreme Being the national religion. Thus the French people were, against their will, forced

by their leaders to have a national religion all through the terror, and it was under the ensign of Unitarianism that the last few bloody months were passed. The Catholics, as I said, massacred many thousands when Robespierre fell, but a new government or Directorate put an end to all the sanguinary quarrels and gave the country peace ; *and this was the only period between the Revolution and Napoleon when France had no religion.*

Most of my readers will agree with me, since these facts are now entirely accepted in serious history, that a reconstruction of the story of Christendom, ancient and modern, is urgently needed. But let us get back to the direct line of our inquiry and see the Revolution as merely the most dramatic expression, ruined by the excesses of political fanatics, of a great forward movement of the race. From the middle of the eighteenth century, as I said, the world was preparing to advance. The American Revolution may be conceived as a political resentment of tyranny, but the movement of ideas which found expression in the Constitution—the ideas of sceptics and deists like Franklin, Paine, Jefferson, and Adams—was an organic part of a world-movement. Voltaire had learned his liberal ideas, as Paine did, in London, and the new spirit went so far that during the war with America liberal leaders like Fox defiantly wore the colours of the rebels in the House, and the citizens of London and Bristol refused the king's request to raise regiments. France, we saw, made simultaneous and even greater progress. Germany witnessed the revolt against tradition that produced Goethe and Schiller. Spain under Count d'

Aranda, Portugal under the Marquis de Pombal, and Naples under the liberal Tannucci made almost equal progress and seethed with ideas and plans of reform. In 1773 these liberal statesmen induced their Catholic monarchs to force the Pope to condemn and suppress the Jesuits : an event which in the religious world was felt much as the fall of the Bastille would be later in the political world.

Let us be quite clear that this was a movement of social reform. It aimed at securing constitutional monarchy—republicanism was entertained by very few even in America until the revolt was well on its way—and ending the feudal tyranny of kings and nobles. It demanded the representation of the people and a share in making the laws. It called for a purification (as voiced by Beccaria and his followers) of law and penal procedure from its grossness. It gave birth to the demand for the emancipation of woman, as set out by Mary Wollstonecraft, Mme. Condorcet, and others. It attacked slavery. It demanded the education of the people as the proper means to end the coarseness in which they had lived for ages. It took up the attack upon war which Erasmus and Grotius had begun. It was, in short, from beginning to end a moderate demand of liberty and justice, of enlightenment, free discussion, and complete freedom of conscience. These are the springs of our modern civilization.

This first real forward movement in Christendom was checked everywhere by the excesses of the French revolutionaries, which, grossly exaggerated and distorted—the number of victims was put as high as

700,000—gave a pretext for the appalling reaction, which lasted until about 1830. What was the relation of Christianity to the forward movement and to the repression of it? Here it is not necessary to enlarge much. It is only the popular apologists who make such claims as that all our modern reforms sprang from a more devout study of the Gospels. Ninetenths at least of the leaders of this movement were either Deists, who thrust the Bible entirely aside, or Atheists; and they were bitterly opposed both by Protestant and Catholic Churches everywhere.

In dealing with personalities of that age it is often very difficult to distinguish between Deists and Atheists. A Mirabeau or a Napoleon, even a dogmatic materialist like Jefferson, would use the word God and not mean much more than an Atheist like Shelley or a Pantheist like Goethe. Since both philosophies were anti-Christian, we need not here try to distinguish. In France the majority of the leaders were Atheists, with a few Deists like Lafayette and Robespierre and a very few Catholics. Pombal, D'Aranda, and Tannucci were at the most Deists and were hated by the clergy, who wrecked their work. Franklin, Paine, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Hamilton were Deists. Pitt (until the reaction) and Fox were Deists—and both probably nearer atheism—and of ten Englishmen who, in their various ways, led the reform-movement in this country—Wilkes, Priestley, Horne Tooke, Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Paine, Shelley, Holcroft, and Hardy—eight were Deists or Atheists and one a Unitarian.

But since the only serious claim for the Church in

the advance of the eighteenth century is that in the person of William Wilberforce it led the movement for the abolition of slavery, I will conclude with a few words on this. No one wishes to deny that a few prominent Churchmen and Quakers joined in the movement. It would be an amazing confession of the futility of the Christian conscience if none even of the educated laity of the Church recognized the evil of the crime when radicals and Quakers began to denounce it. But the almost universal claim that Wilberforce's Christian conscience led him to see the evil and start a movement for abolition is as false as all the other claims.

Here I need not profess to have made any discovery or put a new and disputable interpretation upon the facts. They are frankly stated, largely in his own words, by his sons, both clergymen of the Church of England, in their biography of him. An uncle had tried to make a Methodist of him in his boyhood, and his mother (who seems to have been remarkably liberal) brought him away and deliberately substituted the love of pleasure in his mind for religion. He speaks himself in his diary (quoted in the biography, I, p. 6) of "the dreadful effects of the efforts afterwards [after his twelfth year] used but too successfully to wean me from all religion." In that mood he remained until he was nearly thirty, and his sons admit that he for a long time refused to take a degree at Cambridge (where his friends were all of the liberal group) because he could not conscientiously sign the Thirty-Nine Articles. Yet, they tell us, it was in this stage and set that he learned to attack slavery. At the age of fourteen (1773) he wrote a fiery paper

against it for a York paper. In a letter of the year 1783 he says that his "moral and religious principles are such as in these days are not very generally prevalent" (p. 32). He was a Deist, and his warmest friend was the younger Pitt, who, like his father Lord Chatham, Sir R. Walpole, and Fox, was at the most a weak sort of Deist.

This is not all. Wilberforce became a Christian, and his great work for abolition falls in his Christian days though he had reached his ideal in his sceptical and frivolous days. But the abolition of slavery across the ocean—English judges had long before declared it illegal in England—was his only social service, and against it we must put a lamentable amount of disservice. He supported Pitt in every phase of his reactionary measures against liberalism, defended him in his vile treatment of radicals and his opposition to the reform of Parliament, and was one of the worst enemies of the workers when they fought for trade unions and the betterment of their condition. He was very liberal with alms, but he unctuously repeated the Christian tag about "the condition in which the Almighty had placed them." One has to smile when one reads a modern Protestant apologist boasting to the workers of what the Church did for them through Wilberforce and Shaftesbury. They happen to be the two men who confess in their Diaries that they had to barricade their houses against the workers of London, who hated them.

Slavery was first abolished by those "wicked and bloodthirsty Atheists of the French Revolution." That was in 1791, forty-two years before England.

Of the abolition-movement in America one need not speak to-day. The Church in the south was solid in justification of slavery, pointing out that Scripture nowhere condemned it, and Mr. Brace admits that even the Churches of the north were "arrayed against true Christianity." The non-Christian abolitionists like Lloyd Garrison (an Agnostic) and Lincoln (a Deist) and their Quaker friends were so hampered that, as Theodore Parker said, "if the whole American Church had dropped through the continent and disappeared altogether, the anti-slavery cause would have been further on." The Baptists owned 225,000 slaves, the Methodists 250,000. Mr. Brace says that even the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel owned slaves in the West Indies. And Canon Streeter thinks that its share in the abolition of black slavery is the one social service that redeems the Christian record in modern times!

## CHAPTER IX

### THE STRUGGLE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

ON an earlier page I quoted Canon Streeter, one of the ablest of living apologists, saying that, with the exception of the abolition of black slavery (about which he is very gravely wrong), it is "the greatest blot on the history of the Church in modern times" that the leaders of reform were rarely Christian and the Christian leaders almost always opposed them. We have now to see that he is correct in his statement of fact, and, if this is so, the Christian apologetic is reduced to almost the last stage of beggary. For no sophistry can here obscure the issue. If it be true that the idealism which began in the eighteenth century and bore fruit in the nineteenth, the idealism which has raised Europe back to the level of civilization, came predominantly from Deists and Atheists who ignored the New Testament, the Christian claim fails. But if it is further true that the various branches of the Christian Church opposed these reformers, caused an appalling massacre of those who worked for the reforms, and retarded the triumph of those reforms for fifty or a hundred years—a different period in different countries—we have a final proof of my contention that



Christianity actually hindered the recivilization of Europe.

Let me illustrate why such conclusions bear for many people an air of novelty or eccentricity. It has for years been my hope to find leisure to write a history of the struggle in the last century of the various peoples of Europe for freedom of discussion and self-government. No such history exists, and many of the most poignant national chapters of the story are barely or not at all mentioned in our manuals. Our people, for instance, are easily persuaded to regard the South Italian as a surviving medieval type—"the *dolce far niente*, you know," we say with a smile—and the Spaniard as a gay but gracefully indolent character whose favourite word is *mañana*. Do you know that in the last decade of the eighteenth century there was, in proportion to population, more liberal idealism in the kingdom of Naples (south Italy and Sicily) than in England? Have you ever read that according to the best contemporary Neapolitan historians 250,000 of these liberals of Naples, mostly unarmed, of both sexes and all conditions, were barbarously killed in the struggle for their ideals, and that that is why Naples became what it is? Recent events have enabled us to correct the ideas of many in regard to Spain. But how many yet know that Spain made the longest and not the least heroic struggle for these reforms of all the peoples of Europe and sacrificed at least 50,000 lives, mostly of unarmed men and women?

In short, I wrote my history some months ago—publishers decline it with thanks, some saying that it

is not good taste to recall these facts to-day—and found, rather to my own astonishment, that between 1795 and 1870 (though the carnage does not stop there) France, Italy, Austria, Spain, and Portugal alone saw at least 300,000 of their finest-spirited men and women executed, murdered, or done to death in foul jails and penal colonies in the cause of humanity, or immeasurably more than were martyred for any other cause whatever in any century of history ; and, needless to say, I am not counting armed republican revolts against a monarch. And here, for my present purpose, is the main point : except in the early years of the Neapolitan struggle, when numbers of bishops and priests joined the people, the Church everywhere not only supported but egged on the monarchs and soldiers to commit every barbarity, often in spite of the most solemn oaths, in order to annihilate liberalism, which was simply a demand for political justice (constitutional monarchy), legal justice (reform of barbaric laws and punishments), social justice (freedom of conscience and discussion), the education of the people, and some improvement of the condition of the workers.

The history of Europe from 1794, when the reaction to the French Revolution may be said to begin, to 1870 (and much later in Russia, Spain, and Portugal), which it is such bad taste to recall, is one of the most really instructive sections of the social record of Christianity. Limitations of space here compel me almost to confine myself to events in England, but a few paragraphs must be devoted to other countries. And, since the truculent reaction began first in Naples and

was there particularly repulsive, let me briefly summarize the facts, as told by General Colletta, who was at the time an officer in the Neapolitan army, and the continuer of his history. For the last phase Gladstone endorses the indictment from his own observation.

In 1793 the Queen's spies reported that practically the whole educated class were "Jacobins," and the king, a brutal and dissipated man, executed many and sent thousands to jail. The French interrupted this by taking Naples, but at their departure orders were given to exterminate liberals. Brigands who drank their blood from skulls were enlisted in the work. Human vermin were permitted to roast and eat, under the palace windows, the bodies of liberals they had slain. Thirty thousand were packed into the foul jails; but they were comparatively fortunate, for 40,000 wild troops and bandits were let loose for some days upon the homes, wives, and children of the others. *Twenty nobles and three bishops were amongst the hundreds who were hanged.*

Napoleon's campaign in Italy put a stop to the carnage, and after Waterloo the Powers permitted the butcher to return to his throne only on condition that he would rule constitutionally. At the altar, surrounded by his bishops, the king took the oath, and he in addition called upon God to strike him dead if he did not mean it "this time," as he said. It was his second oath. And his Church and the Pope sonorously went on with their blessings when he, within a few months, got an Austrian army to crush his humanitarians, and thousands again were slaughtered.

By 1825, says Colletta, "one hundred thousand Neapolitans have perished by every kind of death in the cause of political freedom"; and the Neapolitan historian who then takes up the record claims that 150,000 were killed in the next thirty years. We may assume that the figure is at least half as high. But I cannot go into the barbarous details. As late as 1850 Mr. Gladstone visited Naples and made England shudder at the horrors. Ironically, in a famous phrase, he called the royal-clerical government of Naples "the negation of God." People had thought that this applied only to the French Revolution.

In the Papal States or Papal Kingdom I estimate that from ten to twenty thousand martyrs—or twenty times as many as all the Christian martyrs of the first three centuries—were made by the Popes in thirty years. There were massacres of unarmed men and women by troops led by cardinals; there were fever-sodden dungeons in which men condemned for twenty years were chained to the wall, and the chain was never undone for any purpose: there were ghastly fortresses in which noble ladies were herded with the male prisoners under male jailors; there were hundreds of executions, and torture was habitually used to extract denunciations of others. And these men had merely wanted a reform of what even Catholic historians (see the Cambridge History) admit to have been the most corrupt and incompetent government in Europe. Less than eighty years ago the Popes were showing all the world that this was, in practice, their idea of social and political ethics. Now they are widely respected as world-oracles, wise with the

wisdom of ages . . . Even Mr. Wells prefers the Papal Church to any other in his autobiography and is quite tender about it.

The rest must be told in chapter-headings. In Portugal another Catholic (and very depraved) monarch swore a solemn oath in the presence of his God and his bishops to respect the Constitution if they let him resume his throne ; and in five years, with just such barbarity as had been shown in Naples, 17,000 were executed or murdered and 50,000 sent to the deadly jails and penal colonies, which for large numbers was sentence of death.

In Spain, where the people had set up a moderate Constitution before Napoleon fell, King Ferdinand (who had a curious resemblance to Nero in his vices, follies, and cruelties) was admitted back to his throne after swearing to respect the Constitution. Within two years thousands were executed or murdered and tens of thousands packed in the noisome jails. In short, though there was no *armed* revolt in Spain until 1868, about 150,000 Spaniards had suffered for their humanitarian faith to that time, and at least a third of these were executed or murdered or died in foul jails on penal colonies. The clergy themselves organized a Society of the Exterminating Angel and let its murderous members loose upon unarmed liberals all over Spain. The extermination was carried out with veritable savagery—read Major Hume's history of Spain if you doubt me—and the vilest medieval tortures were used in the jails ; and, as I showed in my *Martyrdom of Ferrer*, were still being used in Spanish jails at the beginning of this century.

In France, apart from the thousands who were butchered by Catholic mobs after the fall of Robespierre and the fall of Napoleon, most of the deaths occurred in the revolutionary fighting of 1830 and 1848, when more than 15,000 were shot. But France also had its thousands of quite innocent victims. The promise of Louis XVIII to take no reprisals was worth no more than the oaths of Ferdinand of Spain and Miguel of Portugal. The oath of Louis Philippe, sworn in all the solemnity of Notre Dame, to observe the Constitution was trampled under foot in a few months and thousands suffered ; and the other perjured Louis, Napoleon III, sent 100,000 to death, jail, penal colonies, and exile. In each case the clergy lined up behind the butcher and blessed all his work.

Austria, which until the middle of the last century included the north of Italy as well as Hungary, added tens of thousands to the humanitarian martyrs, not counting the tens of thousands who died fighting. It also used torture habitually. Poland—to turn in conclusion to the Greek variety of Catholicism—added further tens of thousands, though for the first twenty years of the struggle they asked only the rights granted in their Constitution. As to Russia, no man can count the victims from 1820 to 1910, but 100,000 would be a moderate estimate. As late as 1910 there were 174,000 men, women, youths, and girls packed into the jails, one to two hundred committing suicide every month, and hundreds dying of typhus and dysentery.

Leave out Russia and Poland, if you like, and you

have the social record of the Holy Roman Church, which we are asked to respect, not in the days of the Inquisition, but in the days of our grandfathers. What occurred in Protestant lands does not remotely approach the Catholic record in savagery, treachery, and massacre. In England and Germany, it is true, the authorities could not, if they would, have done such things, but let us have some regard for facts in our affections. Making my estimates in each country on the same careful scale, I find that between 1799 and 1870 alone the Catholic monarchs, with the full approval of their bishops, took the lives (by execution, licensed mob-murder, or lethal imprisonment) of at least 300,000 unarmed men, women, youths, and girls, and there were probably nothing like 10,000 such martyrs in all the Protestant lands of Europe put together.

Yet the record of the Protestant Churches is infamous enough, and we will consider it in the case of this country. First, we will summarize what is called the political struggle. Let us understand its nature. By all the leaders in the struggle the "vote" (which was at that time a venal matter, a popular joke) was regarded only as a means to an end. They wanted power to reform the extraordinarily corrupt political and electoral system, to secure a national scheme of education, to reform the law and the sordid penal practice, to destroy all instruments of tyranny, to abolish slavery in the colonies, and to lift the disabilities of the workers. It was a comprehensive humanitarian ideal, and several of the leaders wanted also the substitution of arbitration for war, the eman-

cipation of woman, the reform of the marriage-law, the abolition of the press-tax, and many other reforms.

I have already given the names of the leaders in the eighteenth century and noted that the majority were Atheists and that Wilberforce was one of their most stubborn opponents. One of the funniest cries of modern reactionaries is that a new spirit of revolt has been born of modern scepticism, and they sigh for the placid days of faith. That is the sort of thing we hear as long as it is considered bad taste to tell the truth about even recent history. The fact is that 166 years ago, or in 1768, the soldiers fired on a crowd of London radicals, leaving a hundred dead and wounded in St. George's Fields, and a Minister said in the House :

There is actual or impending riot in every part of the country. From the tinners of Cornwall to the colliers of Newcastle the spirit of insubordination prevails.

And, except in a few periods, when thousands of the leaders were in jail, that spirit lasted until reforms were granted in the sixth decade of the last century. But I must be brief.

Pitt, cordially supported by the great reformer Wilberforce, crushed the reform-movement, which had very large numbers of followers in all the cities of England, with merciless severity. Thousands went to jail or to Botany Bay. Within less than ten years the "philosophical radicals" rallied the survivors. It is now customary for our comfortable Chestertons to sneer at them, but one would like to see seven men



in our time like Jeremy Bentham, Ricardo, Robert Owen, Francis Place, the historian Grote, Sir Francis Burdett, and James Mill: all Atheists. The aristocrat of the group, Burdett (the banker), went to the Tower, and the workers of London attacked it in the hope of releasing him. A few years later they looted the gun-shops and plotted another attack on the British Bastille. Between 1810 and 1820 more thousands went to jail—to vile, fever-sodden dens in which they were herded with the most hardened criminals, of both sexes, without the least regard for sanitation or decency—or to the slavery and brutality of the Australian penal colonies. These were mostly middle-class men and women of comparative refinement. At Manchester the Yeomanry were flung upon a peaceful crowd. But by 1825 the reformers were again active, and they now had the support of such millions of the workers—meetings of 50,000 to 200,000 were held—that the threat of civil war forced the king and Wellington to grant a measure of reform. The people wanted more, and the Chartist Movement began. The meetings—in days without any transport for the workers—now rose to 400,000 in number, and further thousands went to jail, where the terrible conditions drove some to suicide.

I need not go further. What was the attitude of the Church or Churches? You may put it in a word that the Church of England was bitterly hostile and the Methodist Church at the most indifferent; Cobbett, indeed, says that the Methodists were the worst opponents. When the moderate Reform Bill of 1831 came to the House of Lords, after thirty years of

struggle and in face of a threat of civil war, of twenty-three bishops twenty-one opposed it. The Archbishop of Canterbury pronounced it "mischievous," and Bishop Horsley said :

I do not know what the mass of the people in any country have to do with the laws but to obey them.

Yet the Bill enfranchised only the middle-class. Apologists now search the records with microscopes to find the name of some obscure parson who advocated reform or to count the religious laymen who helped. They may have that quaint sort of Churchman Cobbett, whose history of the Reformation makes them shudder, but no other leader of any importance.

But there were anti-Christian reformers who thought little of the vote and worked along other lines : education, the reform of the jails, the improvement of the condition of the workers, the emancipation of woman, peace, the abolition of duelling, gambling, and drunkenness, and so on. High above all others in this broad idealism were the great jurist, Jeremy Bentham (who with the historian Grote wrote an explicitly Atheist work which we might do well to reprint), Robert Owen, and Francis Place : all three Atheists. Every reform was advocated by Owen, who spent his fortune in propaganda ; nearly every reform was taken up by Bentham ; and the ablest friend of the workers in their fight to secure combination was Francis Place. Elizabeth Fry (a Quaker) and Howard were conspicuous in the reform of prisons. Lord Brougham (a very doubtful Churchman) worked

for the education of the workers. Joseph Lancaster, Quaker, worked devotedly for the same object. Lord Shaftesbury, the only prominent Churchman of unquestioned orthodoxy, led a campaign on behalf of many of the workers ; and he strenuously opposed the reform of Parliament, the emancipation of the Jews, the betterment of the lot of the agricultural worker, freedom of the Press, and nearly every other reform. Like Wilberforce, his heavenly twin in apologetic literature, he confesses in his Diary that he had to barricade his house against the infuriated workers.

If I have any reader who does not appreciate the need of reform, who does not know in what condition the vast majority of the people of England were a hundred years ago, twelve centuries after the introduction of Christianity, I must refer him to the full picture in my *Century of Stupendous Progress*. Briefly, the political system was grotesque in its corruption to 1832, and very corrupt after that. The law was gross against the poor and savage in its sentences, while it connived at the universal drunkenness and gambling. Executions were public entertainments ; jails were deadly and indecent ; crime was ten times as rife as it now is. And the most grievous source of all this and of the almost universal vice (London had 25,000 prostitutes to a million people, according to the police, and unnatural vice and rape were appallingly common), drunkenness, coarseness of manners, mania for fighting (men, women, children, dogs, lions, cocks, etc.), was that the workers were still illiterate to the extent of something like ninety per cent and were

exploited like slaves. The average wage was not twelve shillings per week, and the average hours per week for an adult were at least eighty. Children worked ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week, for a penny a day, and were brutalized from early years . . . You remember a once popular picture : Queen Victoria pointing to the Bible and saying : " There is the source of England's greatness."

What did the Church of England do ? Read *The Bishops as Legislators*, by Joseph Clayton, a Churchman, with a preface by the Rev. Stewart Headlam, who calls it a record of " the crimes and follies of the bishops." It is. No bishop supported the Bill for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1809. Only three attended the House of Lords when, in 1815, a Bill was introduced to Prevent the Use of British Capital in the Slave Trade. They took no part in the discussion of the Prevention of Cruelty to Cattle Bill in 1824. In 1832 fifteen of them were still on the opposition, though even the king was intimidated, to the Parliamentary Reform Bill. Two only voted for the Bill for the Total Suppression of the Slave Trade, and only one or two ever supported the various temperance measures that were introduced from 1839 to 1844. Lord Brougham bluntly said that " only two out of six-and-twenty Right Reverend Prelates will sacrifice their dinner and their regard for their belly . . . to attend and vote." They opposed every measure to relieve the workers. Lord Shaftesbury was so angry when they opposed his one pet proposal that he described them as " timid, time-serving, and great worshippers of wealth and power," and said :

I can scarcely remember an instance in which a clergyman has been found to maintain the cause of labourers in the face of pewholders.

But what, you ask, about Kingsley and Christian Socialism? They did not appear until the worst fighting was over, in 1850, and broke up in 1855; and their real founder, F. D. Maurice, admitted that the aim was to "Christianize Socialism." They did fine work, at a late hour, and Kingsley and Maurice were punished by their Church for it.

What about the Nonconformists, who had "gone back to the pure teaching of Jesus"? One Methodist minister, Joseph Raynor Stephens, though a Tory, stood out for the people, rather late in the battle; and he was thrown out of his Church. In the recent book to which I have referred, Dr. Harrison says (p. 53):

From the churches came the early leaders in the trade union movement and in the co-operative societies; from them also come the inspiring challenge of the Christian Socialists and the bulk of the men of strong character and personality who led in the high road to reform.

A pity he does not give the names. In ordinary history we read that the right to form trade unions was won, *twenty years before the Christian Socialists appeared*, by Francis Place and his heretical collaborators, and that Robert Owen then dominated the movement for years. As to co-operation, the movement was notoriously inspired by Robert Owen and George Jacob Holyoake, and, though Ludlow and the Christian Socialists rendered it fine service after 1850, it had branches all over the country by that time and

the Owenites had familiarized London with the idea long before.

We have now expert sectional histories of the various reform-movements in the first half of the nineteenth century when the fight was most laborious and the reward was obloquy : histories of the trade-union movement, the fight for the liberty of the Press and literature, the emancipation and education of woman, the reform of law and the jails, the establishment of a national system of education, and so on. These are impartial histories by experts. What are the names of the "men (and women) of strong character and personality" who stand out in these histories? Surely they are Robert Owen, Bentham, Shelley, Burdett, Place, Mill, Grote, Elizabeth Fry, Harriet Martineau, Richard Carlile, Holyoake, Sadler, Brougham, Lancaster, Cobbett, Molesworth, and Leigh Hunt—two Churchmen, one Deist, two Quakers, and the rest Agnostics or Atheists. Not a single clergyman—Stephens was defrocked—appears in the list of honour until the middle of the century ; not a bishop appears until, in the last few decades, the reformers head the big battalions ; not a single Nonconformist or Catholic appears in the first or second rank. In our debate Dr. Harrison claimed that if you search the records carefully you will find Methodist local preachers repeatedly leading local groups. The audience, I regret to say, was quite rude to him at this point. Did anyone ever contend that no Christians ever joined in that heroic struggle of the early nineteenth century ?

Dr. Harrison claimed, in particular, that the Non-

conformists rallied to the support of Lancaster and the British and Foreign School Society. Here are the facts. At the beginning of the century, when non-Christian writers like Rousseau, Froebel, and Pestalozzi had already stung Europe to some sense of its shame and the non-Christian Frederic the Great and the French revolutionaries had established systems of national schools, England was still illiterate to the extent of more than ninety per cent. Adam Smith (Deist) had demanded reform a quarter of a century earlier, and every radical echoed the demand. From the Manchester group of radicals two men then set out to do something. Robert Owen founded, at New Lanark, the most wonderful school in Europe and inspired many others. The other man was the Quaker Lancaster who, being a Quaker, would not assent to Owen's ideal of purely secular education, so he started a movement for undenominational schools; and, naturally, the Church folk at once began a rival organization to found Church Schools. Owen, a man of magnificent liberality, gave Lancaster £1,000 and all his support—and the Quakers presently helped to wreck his own enterprise because it was not religious—and gave Bell, the Church leader, £500. The Non-conformists certainly patronized Lancaster's schools; they were the only schools in England their children could attend. In fact, Lancaster, whose schools were desperately poor and cheap, got very wide patronage because he showed the wealthy, as Holman says in his history of education, that "children could be taught next to nothing for next to nothing."

Serious reformers, the men with the broad, full

humanitarian ideal, regarded with some disdain this fight of Bel (Bell) and the Dragon (the Quaker), as the wits called it, and demanded a national system of secular schools. They had to fight for half a century, and both Nonconformists and Church bitterly opposed them. As Adams, the early historian of education, said :

The interdict against a united and national system came from the moral teachers of the people and was pronounced necessary in the interests of religion.

It was 1833 before the Government of this rich and Christianly-elevated country made its first grant for education. It was £20,000, or £50,000 less than the grant for royal stables a few years later. In the same year Prussia spent £600,000 on its schools. In the next seventeen years the government grants amounted to £600,000. All the money was divided between the two religious organizations, the Church getting £475,000. The schooling they gave was atrocious, and the number of children taught was still small. The average weekly pay of a teacher was nine shillings. Yet, in the second half of the nineteenth century, only one in fourteen of the population got any schooling : the proportion was one in six in Prussia, one in seven in Switzerland, one in nine in Holland. As late as 1860 a Government report said that of 2,500,000 children of school-age only 1,500,000 attended any sort of school. So the rising tide of democracy swept away the bishops (whom the Christian Socialists supported in this) and Bel and the Dragon, and got the first national system—fourteen hundred years after Chris-



tianity had completed the destruction of the Roman system.

So much for the glorious services in the field of education. Let me glance in conclusion at the women-movement, since our modern preachers find it possible to persuade women that "emancipation" was just a little matter of a vote, because Christianity had secured full justice for women. The idea is preposterous. The nineteenth century found woman in a state of legal, social, and educational, as well as political, subjection from which it has taken a century of fighting to deliver her. Did any clergyman or prominent Churchman (or woman), much less any Church, give any help until, in our own time, women began to quit the churches in millions? Certainly not. Even Kingsley told her to "Be good, sweet maid," etc. The pioneers in the dark days were Mary Wollstonecraft (Atheist), Fanny Wright (or Mme D'Arusmont, Deist), Harriet Martineau (Atheist), and George Eliot (Atheist), supported by Godwin, Shelley, Owen, Bentham, Holyoake, and J. S. Mill, all Atheists. In America it was Abby Kelly (rebel Quaker), Ernestine Rose (Atheist), Lucretia Mott (rebel Quaker), the Grimkes (Quakers), Mrs. Gage (Atheist), Mrs. Cady Stanton (Atheist), and Miss Susan B. Anthony (Atheist).

In the last year of the century (or about that time) I sat in the lobby of the House of Commons with Mrs. Wolstenholme Elmy (Agnostic) and Mrs. Pankhurst to hear the verdict on the latest Bill for women suffrage—a triennial joke of the House in those days. I seemed to be the only man in sympathy with them.

I worked with them for more than ten years and during the early years never saw a parson in the movement. The Church smiled at them, but not with them. And at last came a great celebration of victory in Hyde Park. I was not invited : but there was a parson on nearly every platform . . . That is the record of Christianity.

## CHAPTER X

### DO THE CHURCHES HELP TO-DAY?

MANY of my readers who deprecate the slight tincture of irony, if not of scolding, that gets into my ink at times may now be a little more lenient with me. It has, unfortunately, not been possible to include here the full description of English life and character in the first half of the nineteenth century which I have given in other works; and in no other country were life and character higher, while in most Catholic lands they were far lower. But we have seen enough to know that the Europe, which began to fall from the best level of the Greco-Roman civilization in the fourth century, did not rise again to that level until after the middle of the nineteenth. To any man or woman who perceives this it must seem ironic to claim that Christianity made our civilization. The period from the fourth to the nineteenth century was the longest and worst reaction in history; and instead of the barbarians frustrating the civilizing efforts of the Church, the truth is, we saw, that the Church frustrated their efforts to restore civilization, and in the East it degenerated without the least help from barbarians.

Yes, says your up-to-date—more or less up-to-date—apologist, but we do not now claim that Christianity

made our civilization ; merely that it made very important contributions. I once, when planning such a work as this (*The Bible in Europe*), got my highly respectable and esteemed friend Vivian Phelps (who even talks to bishops) to inquire, Jesuitically, of a number of ecclesiastical writers and dignitaries what exactly they do claim ; for I do not write books in order to make a sectarian point but to give people facts about matters of live interest. The reply was that they claim only to have helped or contributed.

So we have examined the contributions. The claim in regard to slavery or of any service to the workers (nine-tenths of the people) is so scandalously opposed to the facts that any responsible writer ought now to be ashamed to mention it. At the most he may say that the Christian insistence on justice must have helped, but the fact is, we saw, that Christendom was sodden with injustice until the nineteenth century. Almost as wildly fictitious is the claim to have elevated woman, taught the world philanthropy, and introduced education. Indeed, seeing what Rome had done in all these matters, and how scandalous is the record of Christendom, we must dismiss all these claims as, at the best, shocking confessions of ignorance of modern social history. The further claims that Christianity introduced a new idea of the sanctity of human life and a higher personal morality are, surely, after all that we have seen about the state of Christendom from the fifth century to the nineteenth, rather humorous.

Apologists seem to proceed on two lines. They use an antiquated historical literature, when they do not

simply copy from each other, or they cull pretty flowers from the pages of historians like Lecky and Gibbon who were compelled at their early date to use these older sources. They almost never quote a modern authority on the history of slavery, education, woman, charity, chivalry, etc., when they discuss those subjects. I may claim that I never use any but the latest and best authorities. The other line is to brood over selected passages from the Gospels and Paul, and say that these things *must* have changed the world. Hardly one of them ever makes a serious inquiry whether there was anything new in the moral principles of Paul and the Gospels. If not—and in my *Sources of the Morality of the Gospels* I gave Jewish and pagan parallels for every moral text in the Gospels—there was no reason whatever why they should change the world. Any person who does not suppose that the words (often long sermons or sermonettes) of Jesus were taken down in shorthand and treasured until thirty or forty years later should see that the very composite documents which declare themselves to be “according to Matthew,” etc., are just syntheses of the common moral sentiments of the age.

Clerical scholars now perceive, and even some of the most cultivated of them take the line that, while the Stoics entertained a high idealism, they could not influence the world as did a religion that went amongst the people. There seems to be something in apologetic work that destroys a man’s sense of proportion and of scientific loyalty. Not only do these scholars fail to read the facts about the position of philoso-

phers in many of the Greek-Roman cities and are prevented by a stupid traditional libel from appreciating the immense influence of the Epicureans, but they do not reflect that what was chiefly wanted to remove the social vices of the Roman world was influence on monarchs, statesmen, and jurists, not on slaves and carpenters. They thus close their eyes to the large and most beneficent influence which the Stoic-Epicurean ethic or idealism—it was really neither a philosophy nor a religion—obtained in that world, and they ignore the account which even Protestant writers, like Sir Samuel Dill, give of the remarkable philanthropy that relieved every variety of destitution in the second century. "What would these Rationalists do without their Dill?" one apologist peevishly exclaimed in the course of a debate with me. He had himself made the usual copious quotations from Lecky, whose work is half a century older and now needs careful editing. But we have a dozen modern writers to quote besides Dill. There is no dispute about the matter.

However, the answer to all apologists, learned or otherwise, is that in point of plain historical fact Christianity did none of the things which it is supposed to have done. There are non-Christians to-day who profess themselves unable to believe that the "teaching of Jesus" made no improvement in the ancient world. These people often still accept as historical the romances about early Church-life and its saints and martyrs, its communities and catacombs, which, as I said, even Roman Catholic scholars now discard, and they repeat uncritically the conventional

cant about the "sublime" teaching of Jesus. It is part of the price we pay for our commercialized journalism and periodical literature. The oracles must be men or women who will "sell," so peeresses and physicists, travellers, and even music-hall performers like Sir H. Lauder, are invited to pen or to broadcast their ideas about Jesus and his "unique" ideas. Not one of them could pass an elementary examination in the religions and philosophies of 1900 years ago and their moral ideals. So the fiction of a "unique" and "sublime" message is maintained.

To the impartial mind the reason for the social sterility of the new religion is clear. Its basic idea—the approaching end of the world—was fatal to any interest in the social order. And even when it became apparent that Jesus was wrong, and the casuists began to explain away his predictions, his ethic was still essentially based upon extremely disputable and, to any educated Greek or Roman, repulsive ideas. Certainly it brought to them a new conception of God; a God who kept more than half—indeed the great majority of—the race in torture for all eternity. When Paul's theology, of which Jesus was ignorant, was added to this, and the Greeks and Romans further learned that in a fit of temper God had cursed the entire race, because its nudist ancestors had robbed the orchard, the futility of the new ethic was complete. All the Fathers, and especially Augustine, the most influential, and all the more learned doctors for ages, logically drew the conclusion that "the affairs of time" shrank to insignificance in the appalling prospect of our eternal alternatives.

And here is the reply to those who say that the religion and ethic of Jesus have never been tried and we might now begin to try them. By their fruits you shall know them. They were not merely offered to Europe: they were imposed and stamped upon it. And the broad consequences, directly due to the doctrinal framework, were the development of the most mischievous and truculent clerical organization the world had ever seen and the quite general neglect of any ethic at all. Not a tithe of such consequences followed the Atheistic ethic of Kung-fu-tse, and no such consequences—though they were far milder—would have been seen in the Buddhist world if Asia had been faithful to the Atheistic ethic of Gotama. It is worth noting that of four great Asiatic teachers, Gotama, Lao-tse, Kung-fu-tse, and Meng-tse, only the former two had their teaching corrupted in later ages, and these were the only two who wrapped their human ethic in some mysticism.

An ethic established on a mystic basis, whether it is a belief in gods or spirits or the intuitions of philosophers, always will fail. And it never had less chance of success than in our age. The monomark of our age is a note of interrogation. Why? To tell this world of ours that you must abolish war and poverty because we are all brothers under a heavenly father, when a man must read a whole small library to settle whether there is or is not a heavenly father, and he will have four-fifths of our more learned men against him if he concludes that there is, cannot be regarded as educational service. Whether or no the Christian ethic, as it is in Paul and the Gospels, ought to have produced



rich fruits in the past, it cannot to-day. The essential bases of it are challenged all over the world.

A type of apologist is appearing who grants the failure of Christianity during 1800 years, but asks us to see that the ethic it enshrined or obscured can be of great service to us. Let us, he says, bury the past. That is exactly what I am helping to do. When even the majority of Christians use this new language, we shall no longer expose all the horrors and futilities of the past. But the fact is that nine-tenths of them reject with scorn this position of a few advanced clerics. The Churches claim about 60,000,000 members (out of a total population of 160,000,000) in Great Britain and America. At least four-fifths of those are "old-fashioned" Christians: Roman Catholics, the immense majority of the Nonconformists, and probably the majority of the Anglicans. They not only insist on keeping the ethic of Jesus on its old doctrinal basis, but they firmly believe all the fairy-tales about what Christianity has done for civilization. Publications of the Catholic Truth Society, presumably endorsed by such men as Belloc, Chesterton and Evelyn Waugh, make the claim in all its Victorian rawness. So, apparently, do books which boast of an appeal to 300,000 university students.

That claim is embedded in our national education and is assumed in the editorial office of nearly every newspaper in England. Some of the Churches have special organizations for seeing that our journalists and our teachers never venture to question the great illusion. To ask us not to recall the social record of Christianity is as sensible as to ask us not to talk

about war or poverty. We have to continue until the plain lesson of the facts I have here outlined is generally admitted. That plain lesson is that if Europe had been permitted or encouraged by the Church to resume as soon as possible the great cultural work of the Greeks and Romans, as the Ostrogoths and the Lombards wanted, we should to-day be a thousand years further advanced in civilization. If Europe had been permitted and encouraged to cultivate the science which the Arabs and Persians had richly developed by the thirteenth century, we should be five hundred years further advanced to-day. Christianity held the world back, and certainly did not, in compensation, make it chaste and virtuous. For if it had permitted this development of science and free research and discussion, it would have perished long ago.

When we set aside discredited claims, this plain lesson can be obscured only by cutting little areas of light out of the broad darkness of the past and concentrating attention on them. Against any man who said that there have been no good men, no bright areas or periods, between Constantine and the French Revolution that sort of thing might have some educational value. There have been plenty of such good men in 5,000 generations of men and women. We would ask only that the æsthete who likes these things should frankly tell his readers when he is drawing upon ecclesiastical fiction. For instance, he often gives, not only a charming account of Francis of Assisi, but an attractive picture of his followers, the bare-footed friars. In point of fact, his Order was

corrupt and convulsed with quarrels within thirty years. No reform of the monasteries ever lasted a century. In the same way we get quite unhistorical and misleading accounts of the cathedral-builders, the Christian knights, the crusades, Roger Bacon, Luther, the Counter-Reformation, and hundreds of other things. There is dire need of a Rationalist Encyclopædia.

Suppose we could forget, suppose we were permitted to forget, all this malodorous past with its crimes and follies and waste, how should we confront the Churches of our time? Some imagine us as Rationalist bulls to whom Church, Christianity, Jesus, and religion are red rags. On the contrary, in our coldest and most dispassionate moods we are just as emphatically opposed to them. It would be a poor type of man or woman who, knowing all the facts of which I have given a selection and a summary, did not feel some warmth of resentment when he reflects that those vices and cruelties from which the nineteenth century partially relieved our civilization might, but for Christian tyranny and misdirection, have been removed centuries ago. But let us by all means be cold, intellectual, scientific.

We live in an age of such problems and perplexities that we will welcome all the intellectual light and all the genuine idealist sentiment we can obtain. But our perplexities are social. It is loose and flabby thinking that asks us not to criticize the Churches because they "do good" in the personal sense. Not only has the standard of personal character risen considerably during the hundred years in which church-going

or Bible-reading has shrunk by two-thirds, not only is the three-fourths majority of this nation which (according to clerical statistics) never goes to Church no different in character from the one-fourth that for one reason or other does, but common sense, to say nothing of science, asks, when you say that an agency does good, whether it is the best agency for the purpose, whether it is keeping out of action some more effective agency. The Churches certainly are. It is because our journalism, literature, and education sustain this convention that they are the nation's one source of inspiration that we rear each new generation in the sloppy, chaotic, ineffectual way that we do. The new science of social psychology interprets what we call character as a social product, and points out that by a comprehensive scientific operation, embracing the work of the physiologist and psychologist as well as what we call the educationist, we could make enormously more progress than ever. The Churches would fight such a proposal as they once fought evolution : it denies that men have "souls." It is nothing to them that three-fourths of us already, on their own statistical confession, never come under their influence and do not care two pins what was said in Judæa two thousand years ago. So we are left to draw our rules and inspiration from life itself, as men in the best ages always have done. We want to substitute a national and international scientific organization for this casual, haphazard, take-it-or-leave-it business.

As to our social perplexities, the new Christianity has proved as barren as the old. Some of us have watched the Churches for fifty years catching-up with

humanitarian movements. The records of Church conferences during the last few decades are full of warnings that unless the Church takes up this or that cause or movement it is going to be left stranded on the beach when the idealist tide moves on. For ten years I have worked mainly for American readers and watched American religious life. During the last five years it has been amusing. Down to 1930 the pulpit-theme was that Hoover was the God-sent man, and the stupendous national prosperity was God's reward for the virtue of His people. Came the depression, and from pulpit after pulpit it was preached that people must thank God that material prosperity no longer filmed their souls and implore Him never to restore the curse. Came Roosevelt, the real God-sent man, and the golden hope of a renewal of prosperity ; mingled with acute disappointment that he included no interpreters of the Christian ethic in his Brain Trust. America smiles. The men all over the world who confront our problems never consult the Churches; though the American Churches have very elaborate social bureaux and social experts and representatives at Washington.

So it is in every country, on every problem. The Pope, despite his intrigues, was kept out of the League of Nations. Mr. Macdonald, in all his new piety, does not consult the Archbishop. Dr. Norwood (quoted recently in the *Literary Guide*) says in his *Indiscretions of a Preacher* (1932, p. 187) :

The Church has a well-established bias toward charity and the succouring of the unfortunate, but no one takes her seriously as the protagonist of a better world-order.

Naturally: because we outsiders taught her all she knows about a better world-order. It was only when the majority of us were convinced that war is evil, that the poor must be uplifted, and so on, that the Churches discovered that the ethic of Jesus implied these things. That is called "sneering at religion." It is a simple statement of historical facts.

And even now the Churches have no definite and consistent message. The nearest approach to one is the condemnation of all war. But will the Churches all join the C.O.'s if a defensive war is forced upon us? One does not, happily, see them asking us to relax our arms while all the world continues armed. In other words, they will behave in each country as they did in 1914. One would say that moral principle was more plainly needed in discussing the distribution of wealth, for we all loathe war and would like to see how we can get rid of it. But is there a single Church that dare talk more than vague platitude about it? The Pope co-operates with Socialism in Belgium—even wanted at first, if his terms were granted, to co-operate with the Soviet authorities—and also co-operates with Mussolini. He openly comes to terms with the Spanish Republic, and secretly encourages Gil Robles to attempt to strangle it. A priest in Detroit thunders against the banks and capitalists, and in New York the Church is their friend. Are the Protestant Churches different? They inculcate justice; and they leave it to the individual to say what precisely is just.

All this is futile, distracting, unworthy of a scientific age. In school-museums of the future one of the

exhibits that will most entertain the children will be a model of a church with rows of grown-up men and women sitting solemnly while some peculiarly-dressed person urges them to be good. It is an anachronism. It survives only because the Churches are to-day mainly economic corporations which fight for survival. Does it matter ? That is what advanced people were asking, with a superior air, a few years ago in Rome, Vienna, and Madrid. Now, somehow, the advanced movements are in the mud. At all events, we may insist on two things. First, these economic corporations which profess to teach us to be just, truthful, and honourable shall themselves be just, truthful, and honourable in their appeals. Secondly, however long they survive and however many million people cling to them, the scientific organization of life shall not be represented as superfluous because Salvation Armies can show a few converted drunkards or burglars in their annual reports. Life is now too pregnant with possibilities to be left to these heavy night-watchmen of the Middle Ages.

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